

The Language of Heaven:

Unconquerable Power
for Your Life



by Marilyn Madison Campbell

Jesus said, "Behold I give you power." Then why do Christians so often struggle to make their life work? Why do they become discouraged and abandon Christ?

The Language of Heaven puts power back into the hands of Christ's followers, personifying God as a real Being with needs of His own. Rather than a one-dimensional, plastic Santa in the sky, a celestial ATM where Christians go to get things, this work presents Him with the desire to live close to us and bless us.

The Language of Heaven reveals Biblical principles that not only meet perceived human need but also meet true need—that of both God and humanity: the need for connection between God and humans, the need for a constant walk. *The Language of Heaven* spotlights this union as the goal of the gospel, showing how "speaking" in our daily life acts to meet needs and facilitate union.

When we receive the promises of Scripture in God's way, good things happen. A growing number of enthusiastic supporters have tried these principles and proven that they work.

Also by
Marilyn Madison Campbell:
*Light Through the Darkness:
A Vindication of God*

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<http://www.BeholdYourGod.info>

ISBN 978-1438216782



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Available at <http://www.BeholdYourGod.info/loh>

ISBN 1-4382167-8-5
EAN 978-1-4382167-8-2

Edited by Jan Longpre
Copy edited by Barbara Adams

Printed In USA

Bible references are to *The King James Version* (KJV); *The New King James Version*, copyright ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, Tennessee; *The Revised Standard Version* (RSV), William Collins & World Publishing Co., Nashville, Tennessee.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THE MYSTERY OF THE INDWELLING CHRIST	7
OUR NEEDS MAY BE OUR GREATEST BLESSINGS!	17
THE BATTLE FOR THE MIND	26
THE CREATIVE LANGUAGE OF HEAVEN	37
THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE	49
THE WISDOM OF LISTENING	70
"ON A DARKLING PLAIN"	76
"OH, MAGNIFY THE LORD WITH ME..."	85
GOD'S HIDDEN AGENDA	101
APPENDIX A	119
APPENDIX B	122
APPENDIX C	130
BIBLIOGRAPHY	134
ENDNOTES	135

"[H]aving the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know...what is
the *immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe*"

Ephesians 1:18, 19, RSV

INTRODUCTION

We live in a universe alive with mystery. From the brilliant blues, yellows, and reds of heavenly stardust revealed through the Hubble telescope, to the discovery of planets not of our solar system; from black holes to dark matter; from laws governing the macrocosm to those supremely enigmatic laws of quantum mechanics governing the microcosm—mystery surrounds us.¹

We should not be surprised then that the language of heaven contains mysteries not fully known or perhaps even knowable this side of eternity. Is it audacious to shine a light on a subject for which one confesses incomplete knowledge? No, because the language of heaven is about connection—that mysterious and supremely misunderstood heart connection between humanity and God, a subject no more fully knowable than why Jane fell for Jim or why Sara is partial to buttercups. But as surely as scientists can find black holes, new planets, and other celestial phenomena without actually seeing them, the word of God provides an extraordinary array of clues to the efficacy and eternal value of heavenly language in establishing and building up a living connection with our living Creator, the ultimate power source for human lives.

Fragmented, vague, and contradictory has been Christendom's interest in understanding this connection, which, conversely, should rivet our attention, for Jesus said, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."² Do Christians have power? Surely, the name of Jesus is

known throughout the world. It took power to make that happen. But where is the power for the individual Christian? Where is the victory over health challenges? Over broken relationships? Over financial problems? Where is the victory over sin? Shall we invite others to accept Jesus, while leaving them ignorant of the means to implement His power in their lives? Do we have any responsibility to teach new converts how to have victory in every facet of their lives? Or do we implore them, "Accept Christ, and you can be down and out, sick and broken, too?" If the gospel is anything, it is power.³ And if it is the power of God unto salvation, surely it is the power of God for victory in our personal, day-to-day lives. Christians access this power through connection with Christ. But how many see union with Christ as anything more than a useless, overworked phrase?

God's Love Letter

We have had centuries and millennia of religious theory. We have thought that if we had our facts straight and our theology right, that's all that matters. We have not felt a greater need.

But the Bible is far more than a manual of theory. It is a love letter from our amazing and wonderful God. It enlightens some humans to develop such admiration for Him as to render all their other relationships subordinate to it—while other folk stand mystified, finding such bonding incomprehensible.

Yes, correct theology matters, but Scripture offers far more than theory: it offers an experience, a living walk with our living God, and heavenly language plays a vital role in that "something more." Heavenly speaking goes beyond theology, beyond head knowledge, into the realm of life experience, the arena of far too much defeat for far too many Christians for far too many years. Could something as common as speaking make the difference?

God Is Love

The principles this book explores rest on the foundation that God is love, that the infinite Creator gazing at us from on high desires our good, longs to bless us, to give us that which will eternally benefit us. If we have any misunderstandings of His character, any doubts of His compassion, any uncertainties as to whether He will consistently love us and bring us good, put them away for now and always. He designed our lives to be an adventure of discovering His love and nearness to us.

Walter Hooper says that "[C. S.] Lewis could write no great works until he had converted to Christianity."⁴ Perhaps this belief of Lewis explains why:

If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”⁵

In fact, God sends this bulletin to all living men and women: Your blessings do not come from an impersonal “universe.” “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” “He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” This “do-gooder” God “is not far from each one of us.”⁶ Yes, every blessing we enjoy every nanosecond of the day originates in the heart of our magnificent God—our Creator. Biblical statements asserting God’s intention to do good to all, and especially to those who genuinely respect and honor Him, appear often in Scripture, assuring us that His thoughts and intentions toward us are good, that for us He wants hope and a secure future.⁷

Is it not time for us to begin giving credit where credit is due, putting “skin” on the Giver of our bounties?

The wonderful language of heaven allows us to speak out of *that* reality. This could be the most vital of all the important aspects of heavenly speaking. His ways have been so falsely represented by those pretending to speak for Him. Multitudes fear Him; generations dislike, disrespect and ignore Him, based on an inaccurate presentation of Him from a superficial understanding of Scripture.

But God is truly love, willing to walk with us, willing to bless us, and best of all, willing to share His righteousness with us. The language of heaven offers a far better view of our heavenly Father than many have ever had.

Created In God’s Image

As all Christians know, God created humans to be like Him.⁸ This means far more than mere physical likeness. Like Him, Adam and Eve were intended to bring order to their environment, as they dressed their beautiful Eden home. Like Him, they exercised dominion in their guardianship over the animals.⁹ In Cain and Abel they created life in their own image, each sphere a reflection of, but lower than, their own Creator and subordinate to Him.

And in a way scarcely known in Christendom, the God who spoke the world into existence has gifted His race of humans with the ability to speak creatively. Our loss of this knowledge has devastated society. The body of Christ is racked with weakness because we have not understood this principle—and it *is* an eternal *principle*, as will be seen.

Christian Duty

The standards of Christianity often appear formidable to Christians and non-Christians alike. “You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect,” said Jesus.¹⁰ Yes, be perfect as a wife/husband, as a mother/father, as a member of the community. Do your duty. Tote that barge; lift that bail. We stretch ourselves to the limit to be responsible members of society. Yet the expectation of heaven, the shunning of hell, though earnestly desired and as motivating as they are, cannot seem to overcome our human desire for something here and now for ourselves. Maybe just to let down, to rest, to be who we are inside. Christian faith has been considerably compromised by believers—perhaps most of them sincere, perhaps some of them *us*—who couldn’t hold the high standard aloft, and we have surrendered. “Nobody’s perfect,” we hear, both in and out of the church. Perhaps we’ve said it ourselves. Much of Christian theology itself has engineered around this apparently insurmountable obstacle. What could Jesus have meant, we wonder. This has been the “Rubik’s Cube” of Christian thought.

The good news is that there is a solution, and it involves creative speaking. The language of heaven offers humans full self-expression, while they almost effortlessly maintain right principles. “If anyone does not stumble in word, *he is a perfect man [or woman]*, able also to bridle the whole body.”¹¹ But the concept described in these pages is not about what you ought to do. It does not load another duty on already overburdened shoulders.

Let’s say the Biblical patriarch Abraham is resurrected, and he sees a car for the first time. It is at the base of a hill, and he must get it to the top. He gets behind and pushes for all he’s worth. The car moves a few feet. He grabs a large rock and places it beneath one of the rear tires. Again, he pushes mightily. This time it goes only a few inches. What’s more the rock slips out from behind the tire, and the car rolls back to where it began. He leans against the trunk and wipes his furrowed brow. Then along comes the car’s owner. He takes out his key, gets behind the steering wheel, and puts the key into the ignition. Abraham hears a roar, jumps out of the way, and the car shoots to the top of the hill. It was the “key” that made the difference.

Likewise, there is a key to “being perfect,” and that key is heavenly language; it brings joy wherever humans discover it. It entails changing habits, which,

while it takes a little self-discipline and exercise, new knowledge renders pleasant and do-able. Any "effort" goes into the union, the connection, the relationship with God. Where the union is strong, the works, the fruit of God's presence, appear. The language of heaven takes Christian living out of the realm of the burdensome and brings it into the realm of joyful day-to-day experience.

Babes In Christ

How it thrills us when the babies in our life begin to speak. We love it when the goo-goos turn into recognizable words, and we know little Junior's growth pattern is normal and deliciously wonderful to our ears. But we have not understood that there is more to speaking than just putting the right words together in the grammatically correct fashion so as to express a thought. It involves understanding the creative nature of speaking. If our babes could learn the language of heaven from infancy, it would react positively on their entire lives, and the world would be better for it. Scripture compares new Christians to babes.¹² And just as some infants succumb to a condition called "failure to thrive," newborns in Christ can fail to thrive as Christians. Teaching the principles of the language of heaven to newborn Christians could prevent many cases of "failure to thrive" spiritually.

Counterfeits

Some may note a similarity between heavenly language and some non-Christian concepts. Keep in mind how thoroughly the enemy of souls has counterfeited God's plan. God wants us to stay healthy.¹³ Therefore, Satan may have brought the concept of healthful living into non-Christian philosophies in an effort to prejudice Christians against it. In various other ways the enemy has given elements of truth to pagan groups, intermingling it with a great deal of error. This has had the effect of discrediting it to Christians, who want nothing contaminated with paganism. Do you see how the enemy has manipulated our minds? The only question to be asked in seeking truth is: Is it taught in the inspired word of God? If it is, we want it, regardless of how earnestly the enemy has worked to turn our minds against it. God gives us the tremendous honor of extracting the beautiful jewels of truth from the dust and clutter with which time and human distortion have obscured them, and of setting them in their rightful place in the treasury of glorious light.

The enemy knows the power of the language of heaven. An understanding of it is on the short list of truths he most wants to hide from God's people. Words are among our most powerful weapons of faith. Without understanding

and implementing the powerful principles of heavenly speaking, we cannot and do not live by faith.

Heart Connection

The enemy has further substituted denominational connection for union with Christ in the minds of many, if not most, Christians. Thus every facet of Christendom bustles with evangelistic fervor. A constant flow of new souls enters denominations, each of them expecting there to gain greater knowledge of God and of the gospel plan. But do they? Jesus addressed this problem in rebuking the religious leaders of *His* day. He said, "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves."¹⁴ What might He say to us today?

For without that precious union with Christ, church membership has no value, and meager is the amount of instruction given in this area. In fact, union with Christ and how to have it is almost a lost area of knowledge. Christ's ability to return depends upon having *a people* (not just a person here and there) who have looked higher than mere church membership and established personal oneness with Him—a *people* who value that connection more than any earthly treasure.

The language of heaven is about establishing and building up that priceless bond with Christ. The benefits to the Christian begin in this life and continue into eternity. Do we express it in the beautiful Spanish language, which has been called "the language of heaven?" Yes, it can be expressed in that and any earthly tongue, for it entails far more than just putting words together in a comprehensible way. In any language, it employs words of faith and power.

God has even supplied the vocabulary of the language of heaven. "By which have been given to us exceedingly *great and precious promises*, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."¹⁵ Yes, those promises—God-inspired words—address our needs. And in a way hardly known in this world they also enable us to establish that essential connection with the living God and to become partakers of His nature. But how do we pick those promises up off the pages of the inspired word and get them living in our lives? How do they bridge across the gap that sin has wrought to unite divinity with humanity, God the Holy Spirit with you and with me? These questions are the subject of this small work.

"Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection."¹⁶

THE MYSTERY OF THE INDWELLING CHRIST

“Christ in you, the hope of glory”
(Colossians 1:27, KJV).

Malcolm stood beside the kitchen deck, his breakfast plate before him, his right hand slightly raised heavenward. In those early morning hours he wasted no time in arranging his trajectory out the front door so as to arrive at work on time, and today his focus was no different. “Thank you, Father, for the food,” he said hastily, as he had said so many times before. “Please bless it to my use.” His eyes opened. In a nanosecond he saw something—so fast there was no time for emotional reaction—no fear, no awe. Then it vanished. No sound track accompanied the visual.

In that split second he peered out from behind a raging waterfall. He seemed to stand behind it, as torrents of water flowed down before his eyes. His upraised arm appeared as the mighty walls of granite one often sees in nature, hosting massive waterfalls, as over his arm also flowed cascades of the raging torrent. A memory flashed into his mind; he thought of the breakfast table of his youth and the Nabisco shredded wheat boxes on which appeared drawings of Niagara Falls, strikingly similar to what his eyes beheld. As the scene vanished, just as quickly his mind changed. No. It’s not a waterfall. It’s a transparent robe. I saw through the liquid folds of a transparent robe.

Through the ensuing days he contemplated the vision. What did it mean? No explanation ever came. As one not given to events of the supernatural,

Malcolm could only speculate that it might have something to do with the intense program of prayer and study of the inspired word to which he had given himself of late. Problems in his life coupled with the fact that his life was about commitment to God made him question His way of thinking. In his mind God was supposed to hear prayer and fix things. Why were his prayers not getting through? How could a God who was supposed to love people be so indifferent to what he saw as his *desperate* needs? Such thoughts dominated his prayer life and hovered quietly on the periphery of his mind as he daily “fed on” the inspired word and went about his duties.

As he studied and the days passed, a new picture of God’s participation in the world of humanity that might explain the transparent robe began to take shape in his mind.

Christ in You

Scripture paints a remarkable picture of God’s intentions regarding the human race. The writings of the apostle Paul show he clearly understood and taught it, yet it is one of those eternal truths virtually lost through the assaults of time upon the gospel. One of the earliest statements about it occurs in Genesis 15:1, where God says to Abraham, the father of people of faith, “*I am your shield,*” He said. “*Your exceedingly great reward.*”¹⁷ Here, in the first book of holy writ, God expresses His desire regarding humans. *I am your shield,* He says. *I am your incalculably great Treasure.*

We have no greater need. We have no prospects higher. We have tended to get our needs “on backwards.” We want God to make us comfortable and happy, to heal and protect us. We have thought of Him as the great Santa in the sky who exists to meet these everyday needs of ours. But thinking of God as a value in Himself, One who desires our friendship and wants to walk with us, to think of Him as a Friend closer than a brother—how many have ever done so? How many have thought of God Himself as not only “our shield” but also as our “exceedingly great reward.”

But is it real or a mere figure of speech?

Scripture abounds in evidence of God’s desire to walk with humans. “*I dwell in the high and holy place,*” He says. “*With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones*”¹⁸ If these words are only metaphors, how do we account for the abundance of this concept in sacred writ?

To us the idea of the living Creator enjoying fellowship with fallen humans almost seems mythical. Our interest in understanding and entering into this arrangement has been foggy to nonexistent, in spite of innumerable references to it in Scripture. We can perhaps see Him befriending Adam and

Eve before the fall, walking with them in the evening coolness, but Scripture says He wants the same association with His *fallen* children today. It says, "He is a shield to all who trust in Him."¹⁹ In order to shield, He would have to be very, very close to us indeed, would He not? Our human minds have interpreted such imagery as having something to do with getting our theology right or enrolling with the correct religious group. But Scripture suggests there is more. It offers an overwhelming body of evidence of the opportunity to dwell with divinity in our everyday life and of our need for a greater understanding of this topic.

And if the living God condescends to visit us and to make His home in us, shouldn't it be our priority to understand it; should it not be a subject of powerful and unrelenting interest? Think of it!

Human Illustrations

Scripture actually names some in ages past who have made this connection with the Most High God the most important aspect of their lives. One of the earliest, Enoch walked with God and, without fanfare or goodbyes, God took him alive to heaven. He simply "was not found" on earth any more.²⁰ God transported him from faith to sight in one glorious moment of full reunion.

Noah, the great boat builder, and Abraham, father of people of faith, also walked with God.²¹ They had a connection with Him more real than that between humans. Moses, the meekest man on earth, suffered a turbulent life, leading Israel out of Egypt. How did He do it? "He endured as *seeing* Him who is invisible."²² Moses, it appears, "saw" God constantly, and this sense of His presence, this constancy of connection, infused Moses with the wisdom and will for the great work assigned Him in heaven's plan.

King David knew something of it and continually referred to it in His great psalms. "My goodness is nothing apart from You," he said. "I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved." "My eyes are ever toward the Lord."²³ One needn't read far in David's works to find these wonderful descriptions of a God near at hand.

Dr. Luke in the New Testament mentions Simeon, a righteous man living in an apostate age, whose connection with divinity was so close that heaven assured him of the fulfillment of his heart's desire, saying he would not die until he had seen the Messiah.²⁴ The Holy Spirit directed him into the temple at the precise time Joseph and Mary came to dedicate baby Jesus.

Real or merely figurative? How are we to understand it? Does God, from His vast eternity, see our guidance needs and type directions into a celestial computer that sends information to our minds, influencing us for good? Is

this what Scripture means by “God with us,” – “I will send you a Comforter?” Or is there a real though invisible Presence, an actual Intelligence, that is both “with us” and “in us,” a living though invisible Deity filling us, walking with us, as we go about our daily tasks? And, if so, can we bring Him out of the shadows of our consciousness and make Him real in our awareness? Can we “connect” with Him, and if we can connect with Him, how?

The Example of Jesus

“I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star,” said Jesus,²⁵ the Star and Center of all truth regarding living in the presence of the invisible God. As the Son of man, He trod the soil of this dusty planet, modeling our role in the gospel plan, showing us what heaven intended our part to be. And He walked with God, His Father.

Jesus claimed to operate solely from or through His Father’s indwelling presence. He spoke only the Father’s words. He claimed oneness with His Father; that the Father was in Him; that He was in the Father; that all His righteous works, His miracles actually flowed from the Father’s presence in Him. Rejection of Him equaled rejection of His Father. Receiving Him equaled receiving His Father.²⁶ It seems clear from these and other statements that the human Jesus required the presence of His Father working within Him to do the miracles He did, to teach as He taught, to live as He lived.

What does this say to us today? Obviously, entering into such a connection with God requires total surrender of this world, the final death to self. Marriage, its human symbol, as established in Eden, obliges man and woman to turn away from all other romantic connections, and to turn fully toward each other. In neither case is it a sacrifice, in the ideal. God intended that the gain so far exceed any question of loss, in spite of any appearances to the contrary, it should entail no sense of sacrifice—only joy in entering a better way of life.

His Father’s presence, which Jesus found as real as any visible reality, comforted Him in His lonely earthly sojourn. “I am not alone,” He said, “but I am with the Father, who sent Me.”²⁷ And when on the cross, the loss of that comforting presence wrung His heart, as He cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”²⁸ It was not the nails that pierced His flesh as much as the loss of the comforting sense of His Father’s nearness that took the life of the Savior. He could not live without that cheering presence, and because He agreed to let it go, we now have hope.

Jesus clearly taught, and seemed to take joy in the thought, that by His sacrifice His purchased children could abide in Him. “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him,” He said,²⁹ comparing

His words to His flesh and blood. As the physical act of eating nourishes the body and provides temporal life, His words can provide *eternal* life to the mind and heart. Does that eternal life mean bringing divine presence into human existence? Is that what it means to abide in Him? Jesus emphasized that there is something about abiding in Him that enables humans to bring forth the fruits of righteousness.³⁰ Only in understanding and entering into that “abiding” experience can human lives reflect the character of the Master. “I am the vine,” He says. “You are the branches.”³¹ Only as we abide in Him do we have His life—His eternal life—flowing in us. Only then can our characters manifest heavenly fruit. Without Him—without abiding in Him—we can only sin. But is it real or imaginary, genuine or a metaphor? Does speaking play a role in it?

I will send you the Comforter, He promised.³² And this Comforter would be with His people forever, even to our own time and beyond to the end of the world. Two thousand years ago Jesus came to earth in the Age of the Messiah to bring us eternal hope. His cross stands prominently above the very heart of history. Its power to provide forgiveness and to re-create the fallen knows no limit. But what would the cross be, what could it do, without the work of the Holy Spirit upon human hearts? Our day, perhaps more than any other, is the Age of the Spirit—when those who are willing can have a living walk with the living Creator, as the Holy Spirit makes effectual what Jesus wrought out for them upon His cross.

The Witness of Paul

Pre-eminent among Bible writers, the apostle Paul understood the gospel as well as any human and devoted his life to its proclamation. Some of the best and most insightful statements in Scripture come from his writings. Did Paul understand “abiding in Him” to be a metaphor, or did he treat it as a real experience?

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have *put on Christ*,” he says. “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so walk in Him*.”³³ He even appears to defend himself from some of the early Christians who “seek a proof of *Christ speaking in*” him.³⁴ As Jesus before him, he claimed that the words he spoke came from Deity living in him. His loftiest goal, at the end of his earthly sojourn, was to “be found in Him,” not having his own righteousness from strenuous efforts to keep the law but to have the righteousness of faith in Christ, his invisible Companion and Master.³⁵ If Paul saw that connection between the human and the divine as anything but real, his writings do not show it. He seemed fully committed to the idea that

humans have the wonderful privilege of dwelling daily in the sweet, living presence of their invisible Lord and Creator.³⁶

His highest goal for new converts was that they be strengthened through God's Holy Spirit in "the inner man," that Christ might dwell in their hearts through faith.³⁷ The apostle Paul's work reveals this as his primary theme. The Christianity he taught meant living in that divine and effectual presence day-to-day. To Paul this was the gospel—God's power to save humans.³⁸

The Witness of John

Both the youngest and longest lived of Jesus' disciples, the apostle John takes the theme of oneness with God to lofty heights. It was John who recorded Jesus' words, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me...I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one."³⁹ In these words John sets out the very essence of the gospel. It is a theme from which he seldom strays throughout his writings.

He spoke of an abiding "anointing" that also has the capacity to teach us all things, including how to "abide in Him."⁴⁰ Can the "anointing" be anything other than Jesus, now our High Priest, pouring out His Holy Spirit into our lives day by day?

Continuing, John says that anyone claiming to abide in Him must "walk just as He walked," for that connection empowers humans to live above sin.⁴¹ What a bold claim for the apostle to make! Humans attempting full obedience to God's commandments without the conscious presence of God's Spirit always fail. Then, when disappointment and discouragement set in, too often these souls—so precious in God's sight—release their hold on Him and are lost to the gospel—a loss preventable through correct teaching. John makes clear that obedience, ever the litmus test of love, only flows out of that abiding experience.⁴² In fact, *agape*, the wellspring of obedience, attests to God's presence in the human⁴³ for only Deity can produce it.

Abiding, In the Book Of Acts

Christians today could take a new and thoughtful look at the book of Acts, especially at the reality of the Spirit in the lives of apostolic Christians. Living in them, invisible to the eyes but visible in righteous deeds, the Spirit directed the early church to such efficiency that the apostle Paul could say the gospel had "sounded out" to the known world of his day.⁴⁴

It is recorded of Simeon, John the Baptist, and others, that they had a special connection with the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ But on the Day of Pentecost ten

days after the ascension, the highest level of Holy Spirit power in history came on the church in Jerusalem, eventually shaking the world. Jesus had foretold, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you," and when that prediction came true, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."⁴⁶

In the power of the Spirit, Peter preached on that day, and three thousand souls received the gospel.⁴⁷ Later, in Joppa, Peter had a vision. When he heard the Spirit's voice telling him to go to Caesarea with three strangers, he remembered the vision, saw what God meant to teach Him by it, and immediately obeyed. Those early Christians recognized the voice of God. They were accustomed to divine miracles of grace and guidance.⁴⁸

True prophets lived in those days. One of them, Agabus, under the Holy Spirit's inspiration, predicted a great, worldwide famine, which literally occurred during the reign of Claudius Caesar.⁴⁹

The Spirit sometimes overruled their plans. At one point they attempted to go into Bithynia, "but the Spirit did not permit them."⁵⁰ How wonderful to have an omnipotent, omniscient Power directing in these decisions. How much time and effort, how many resources would that save?

The wonderful promise in Joel, fulfilled to initiate the gospel, may have a second fulfillment "before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord." "It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophecy. Your old men shall dream dreams; your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days."⁵¹ We have the prospect of living under the Spirit's direction as certainly as did the early Christian believers. But, as surely as the early church studied to understand God's plan before the Holy Spirit fell in power,⁵² in the last days only those who have learned of and experienced oneness with Him will stand ready to receive and replicate that great apostolic experience.

Therefore, can any subject be more important to study? "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."⁵³ Heaven is accessible to us through Christ. In Him we may have eternal life in a perfect world. What can *this* world offer in comparison? Heaven is a free gift, yet it requires all to obtain it.

A minister I know has remarked that he frequently talks with his angel. I find that puzzling and wonder if the angel might find it puzzling as well. After all, the angels' work is to bring us into fellowship with Christ—a fellowship

that may be stronger and deeper than even they themselves can know; might they wonder at us for “settling” for communion with them, when we can commune directly with the Most High God? Holy angels are wonderful and appreciated to the nth degree. But what is it to talk with God, to commune with Him in the heart and mind throughout the day, as one talks with a friend? Is it not a privilege above all others?

Where To Find Him

There are times when the human heart cries out for God. If only we knew where to find Him, we would go to Him and cast our weary souls at His feet. He would comfort us with His very presence. He would encourage us, tell us He understands, that He is with us and will never leave us. But where do we go to find Him?

The apostle Paul quotes Moses in answer to that question: “Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).”

Can you hear the question from the great heart of humanity? Where is Christ? Where do I go to find God? Who will ascend into heaven, to bring Him down to me? Who will descend into the abyss to bring Him up? It is as if He had died. Who will bring Him to me in order that I might have the comfort of His presence? No, the apostle says. That is not the way.

“The *word* is near you, *even in your mouth* and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach): That *if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus* and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and *with the mouth confession is made to salvation.*”⁵⁴ In times of loneliness, discouragement or fear, when God seems far away, heavenly language can reconnect us with Him, can open our hearts to a heavenly dimension, where His comforting presence fills us with a peace that passeth all understanding.

But it doesn't stop there. One cannot overestimate the power of the right words at the right time in nurturing connection—both with heaven and with those cherished though sometimes troublesome humans in our life, for not only does creative speaking apply to our “vertical relationship” with God, it applies to our “horizontal relationships” with those around us as well. If all knew and used it in sincerity of heart, the world would be better for it. It is these creative language skills that we have missed.

Satan's Counterfeit

The apostle Paul calls it a "mystery among the gentiles," or "Christ in you, the hope of glory."⁵⁵ Do not confuse it with pantheism, which is Satan's counterfeit. The track of truth lies close beside the track of error. Pantheism wants to fan the flame of "godness," that some claim exists in humans, into full-blown Deity. This is a useless endeavor, for there is not one spark of anything in humans that can grow into divinity. Nothing! "Christ in you" is separate, not a part of the human, yet in a way we do not pretend to understand can *come into* the soul-temple of the human to create a divine-human connection. The human surrenders to the divine; the divine takes over, yet only as long as the human chooses to surrender. And, conversely, the human's free choice can discontinue that arrangement. The way to always distinguish between pantheism and "Christ in you," is that:

- Pantheism says the human has potential to become God.
- "Christ in you," says humans can *never* be God. Union always requires *two beings*—one human, one divine.

This connection is the gospel's goal. It's called the atonement or the at-one-ment. Through earth's dark night of sin, the light of God's eternal purpose has shone, seeking to bring His people to understand and enter fully into atonement. His enemy has offered counterfeits, has be-clouded, confused, and distracted humanity to prevent this powerful knowledge from reaching the people. God has also had His champions in every age who understood and entered in. But He has never had *a people* who were willing to surrender all to Him and enter in. Prophecy says that will change in earth's final hour, and God will finally have that remnant fully devoted to, and living in, Him through the Holy Spirit.

Billy

Billy was an only child, and to ease his loneliness he invented an invisible playmate—not an unusual move for lonely children. His mother told me how she had to set a plate at the table for the playmate, how they took the playmate with them riding in the car, how they had to be careful not to "sit on" him. This playmate was more real than reality to Billy, and it appears that is how God desires us to see Him in the day to day.

To the great apostle Paul, to the early Christians; indeed, to Jesus Himself surely God, the mighty Creator of heavens and the earth, was a shield and an exceedingly great reward. They found in Him that which satisfied their soul, a Friend that stood closer than a brother. But we have felt that Christianity is

about evangelism, about paying tithe and going to church—all good activities in themselves. But absent “Christ in you,” these activities cannot save. The prevalence of statements in Scripture of the Holy Spirit’s participation in the human realm has made us think that to devote attention to it would be laboring the obvious. Thus has the enemy stolen so much from us.

OUR NEEDS MAY BE OUR GREATEST BLESSINGS!

"God shall supply all your need"
(Philippians 4:19).

Please, Lord," Carrie, R.N., prayed softly, as she maneuvered her van into Loretta's driveway. "Let me get it in one stick."

Elderly Loretta's fragile veins always resisted Carrie's efforts to draw blood samples from her. Far more often than she liked to remember, she had left a bloody bruise on top of her hand, on her ankle, elbow or anywhere she tried to extract the blood. Carrie tried to ignore the knot forming in her stomach. This day, she determined, would be different, and she enlisted power from on high to make it so. Heaven heard, and Carrie got the blood that day with very little effort.

She had a need. She brought it to God, who heard and answered. How simple.

Scripture describes a woman who, sadly, has no perceived needs. Her name is Laodicea,³⁶ and in prophecy she may symbolize the final church on earth, possibly placing her in our own time. Laodicea thinks she has everything, that she is rich, increased with goods and has need of nothing. But the True Witness of Revelation (Jesus) beholds her sadly, because unless she can feel her need of something, anything—unless she can perceive a need in herself—He can do nothing for her. And in contrast to her belief, she is utterly, utterly needy.

Need Is Wealth

Those who are rich in need and know it have a treasure trove to use in cultivating an “in Him” experience with Christ. Scripture’s abundant promises reveal God’s earnest desire to meet those needs. But in so doing He has a *hidden agenda* that makes our needs our greatest blessings, for by Him “have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these *you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*”⁵⁷ Please notice: No distinction is made in the promises. All of them, received and believed in the heart, not only fulfill in the life, they enable us to become “partakers of the divine nature” in a mysterious way explored in this work. The apostle Paul agrees: “Therefore, *having these promises*, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”⁵⁸ Notice the purpose of the promises—that we might be purified from sin.

“Can two walk together unless they are agreed?”⁵⁹ Can we walk with God without agreement? Scripture says God is not just holy but is *changeless* in character;⁶⁰ the Ten Commandments describe His view of right and wrong. Therefore, any differences in character between the Creator and His created will resolve in favor of the Creator’s character—*His* view of right and wrong. It’s a good plan that not only makes possible our walk with Him, it protects the universe as well. And He has made no promises to those who complacently agree to cherish a disobedient heart.

The First Promise

God spoke the first gospel promise, surprisingly, to Satan in his serpent disguise in the Garden of Eden, when He evicted our first parents from the special home He had prepared for them. For luring humans into sin, Satan’s punishment would be certain and final. “I will put enmity between you and the woman,” He said. “And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”⁶¹ That promise guaranteed an end to the serpent’s reign of sin and offered hope to the human race. Humans would have another chance through the One who would come, whose “heel” would suffer appalling torment, but whose reign of righteousness would last eternally.

Millennia later, God repeated this promise to Abraham, the father of earth’s faithful.

“Look now toward heaven,” He said, “and number the stars if you are able.” He promised the patriarch descendants as numerous as that. “I am the Lord,” He continued, “who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit.”⁶²

God confirmed this promise both to Isaac⁶³ and to Jacob,⁶⁴ Abraham's son and grandson respectively, not simply by the flesh but by the spirit.

"The promise" traditionally believed to belong to Abraham's children by flesh and blood inheritance, in actual fact belongs to those who share his *attitude toward God*—His spiritual experience. The promise is "to those who are of *the faith* of Abraham."⁶⁵ This is the overarching "umbrella" promise under which all other Bible promises exist. Those who receive God's promise to Adam and Eve, to Abraham and his seed, qualify for the other promises as well.

Qualifying Needs

What qualifies as a need? Anything very, very important to us that lies beyond our human capacity to fulfill. Correctly understood, all resources come from God. However, those who routinely seem to meet their own needs can misunderstand and think *they* can handle everything on their own. It is difficult for such individuals to realize the role God plays in providing for them. For this reason, needs we *know* we cannot handle on our own, or even seem to, inform us of our need for an omnipotent, loving God on our side.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow described this aspect of the human condition in his Hierarchy of Need. He portrayed a pyramid or ladder stacked from bottom to top with progressive levels of human need. On the bottom he placed physiological need, such as food, water, and air. Until those needs are met, the mind is unlikely to seek fulfillment of any higher needs. Safety and security come next, followed by the need for love and belonging. As these successive needs are met, the human spirit is freed to seek needs on the next higher level. The respect of others and, importantly, self-respect fit there, with self-actualization capping the whole. Filling these lower needs releases the human mind to seek realization of its true inner self.

Examples of qualifying needs range from extreme illness to extreme shyness and everything in between. Some have financial needs only God can correct. Career and business needs qualify. Character needs are priceless. Yes, the putting away of that sin that "so easily besets you" qualifies as a need. The salvation of family and friends. In fact, needs appear everywhere. But a need must motivate us. It must "own" us to the level that we will not, indeed cannot, forget about it. It must invade the very cells of the mind and body and dominate the thoughts during the waking hours. Jesus described the needy as "the poor in spirit" and promised them the kingdom of heaven.⁶⁶ "The poor in spirit" are not necessarily financially or materially impoverished. They merely feel their need of something. Their sense of need drives them, keeps bringing them to the One they believe

will fill those needs. Why do they believe this? Because God's word says so.

What if you're not well and need health blessings: He has promised, "I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians [or people of the world], for I am the Lord who heals you." "I will take sickness away from the midst of you." "Your healing will spring forth speedily." "By His stripes we are healed."⁶⁷

Some may have a sin by which they suffer constant defeat. Pornography and all manner of sexual impurity; temper, and intemperance, to name a few. God has given wonderful promises for victory over sin. Here are just two: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. *He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it*" (1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24). "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). The same is true of whatever your need may be. God has given innumerable general promises that can apply to any need: "God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."⁶⁸ "Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."⁶⁹

Some express concern as to whether or not the need they feel is the need God wants to supply. I know what I want, they say. But does God want that for me? Is it His will? You may be sure that God is well able to inform you, if indeed He has any objection to your goal. But whether or not it's His will is beside the point—to Him! Unless Scripture specifically forbids your goal, if it motivates you, if it keeps you coming to Him, be assured it is exactly the thing for which you need to pray.

Some have multiple needs. They wonder how to choose the correct need from among so many. These folk are the wealthiest of all. Bring *all* the need to Him. Or prioritize it and choose the one(s) you count the most important. Spend time thinking, praying, then determine the one(s) you think the most crucial, the one(s) that will motivate you the most. And, oh, yes, it bears repeating. God has made no promises to anyone with a rebellious spirit. "Whatever we ask we receive from Him, *because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight*."⁷⁰ This theme permeates Scripture but is often misunderstood. Humans tend to think God won't receive them until they have put sin out of their lives. Nothing could be farther from the truth. "Christ died to save sinners," the apostle Paul cried out, "of whom I am chief." "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that *while we were still sinners*, Christ died for us."⁷¹ God is looking for the right *attitude* here, for humans who are willing to be made willing to

have sin banished from their lives and who will cooperate with Him in its accomplishment. He looks on our need with faithfulness and compassion, and "He ... will do it"⁷²; He will do the cleansing work in us, as we walk with Him.

Jesus told a story of a publican (sinner) and Pharisee (religious leader of the day) who went to the temple to pray and happened to be there at the same time. The great religious leader praised God for all his own goodness, recounting his supposedly meritorious attributes. But the lowly publican beat on his chest and said, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Guess which one went home accepted of God? The publican. (Read the story in Luke 18:10-14.) God's ways are often the reverse of our usual way of thinking. The point is: God can only reach those who reach out to Him in need. He has no door of access otherwise.

The obedience called for in the Word is often misunderstood. Jesus said: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."⁷³ Believing begets behavior. Behavior follows belief. This is a core element of our humanity. What we *do* reveals how we *think*. Attempting to live against our beliefs is virtually impossible. Either our beliefs will alter to reflect our behavior, or we'll "hit a wall," where we cannot continue to live against our beliefs. Thus, according to Scripture, works or behavior provide a gauge of the heart's deepest thoughts and reflect our inner life so accurately it can even provide a basis for judgment.⁷⁴

The Ten Commandments express God's way of thinking. When we receive Jesus into our heart, His way of thinking becomes our way of thinking. As we come to know and love God more, as we believe He is real and present in all our moments, our behavior changes to reflect that of our Companion. Earth may not recognize us then, but we are known and loved in heaven.

Obedience, further, like brushing one's teeth or tying one's shoes, has no saving merit. The activities we could list in this category are almost endless. But simply because an activity has no *saving merit* doesn't mean it has no *use*. Thus it is with obedience to God's commandments. The purpose of obedience is to create an atmosphere around us in which the Holy Spirit and holy angels love to dwell. It facilitates our walk with God; it attracts, rather than repels, holy beings. Correctly understood, the human role is to will obedience, to cooperate with God in His work of saving us. Obedience demonstrates the genuineness of our love for God,⁷⁵ and while it has no saving merit, I guarantee you, neither does *disobedience*.

In humans, God is creating a race that is safe to save. Only those humans willing to surrender to the obedience He wants to give will live in that land where affliction won't arise a second time.⁷⁶ Imagine if everyone obeyed His

Ten Commandments, starting today. Would it not be heaven on earth? Truly, as the apostle says, “The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”⁷⁷

Never fear to pray, “Your will be done.” God blesses “exceedingly abundantly *above* all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”⁷⁸ What we ask may be far below what God wishes to do in the matter. Therefore, be sure to leave in God’s hands the full expression of His generous will.

The Apostle Paul’s Need

The apostle Paul tells the story of his own need. He states that he, in prayer, battered the door of heaven three times, imploring God to remove a “thorn in the flesh,” with which he apparently, at that time, believed he could not live. The answer came back, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”⁷⁹ Paul received these words as the very best answer to his prayers, from then on “boasting” in his “infirmities.” Why? *In order that the power of Christ might rest upon him.* God saw that what the apostle wanted was not what he needed. God understood him far better than he understood himself. Paul longed for perfect healing of his “thorn.” But God, who created and thus understands the human mind better than we, knew Paul needed that thorn to motivate him to persistently, constantly, unrelentingly seek heaven’s amazing grace to strengthen and sustain him in his gospel work. Given a choice between having his need met or having the power of Christ to move the gospel forward, to Paul it was no contest. He gladly took the power of Christ, and what a difference it has made to our world.

Now he says, he takes pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses; for when he is weak, he has God’s word that at that time, the power of Christ rested upon him.

He knew the truthfulness of his own counsel: “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”⁸⁰ God denied Paul the specific answer to his prayer; however, He gave him so much more. The apostle weighed the respective value of what he wanted compared with what God wished to give him and concluded that having a key role in forwarding the gospel—something he apparently could not have had, if God had granted his prayer request—outweighed the gift he so earnestly sought. He needed that need; it was God’s agent to keep Paul coming to Him for sustaining grace.

Then it might be asked, how can we know whether we are praying in God’s will—or not? As already mentioned, without a specific Scriptural

prohibition, anything we need—anything—qualifies. If God should speak to you as he spoke to Paul and tell you not to pray for that, doubtless then you should stop. Otherwise, God is well able to impress the heart. If it is not His will, the desire will fade.

Sometimes when the need is met, we respond like the man sliding down a steeply inclined roof. "Save me, Lord," he cried. Just then he slid over a nail that snagged in his trousers. "Never mind, Lord," he said. "I just caught a nail."

Be aware. Sometimes the need is met and it seems so natural we fail to realize it was God who brought the answer to us. Sometimes our sense of need will change. It is as if God responds by changing our heart awareness of need. It is God who gives us the desires of our heart.⁸¹ We may find one desire leaving and another replacing it. Any of these possibilities may occur, as God moves on the things of earth to bless His children.

Or, like Paul, we may need our need. Therefore, regardless of the outcome, knowing God is hearing and answering our prayers, that all things work together for our good, we have the joy of praising Him because He loves us and because He is responding to our needs in the way we would choose for Him to respond, if we knew the end from the beginning.

But coming to Him we must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.⁸² The language of heaven encompasses this belief as its very foundation.

God's Need

Anthropomorphic. We sometimes use this great, imposing word to describe what God is *not*. The dictionary says it means attributing human characteristics to gods. We don't do that, when it comes to the Creator. We have traditionally shied away from representing the Creator God in the same light as pagan gods, who *are* anthropomorphic in that they exhibit the same meanness, jealousy, selfishness, etc., as many in the human family. In fact, you could hardly find a human family more "dysfunctional" overall than some in the heathen pantheon of gods. We have shunned use of the word *anthropomorphic* in referring to the Creator specifically to avoid even a casual connection between Him and these made-up deities.

But if I may be so bold as to suggest it, we may have lost something important in the process. We deny God *any* qualities like our own, whereas Scripture gives Him what some might call very human qualities at times. Joy, for instance. Zephaniah 3:17 says, "The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will *rejoice* over you with gladness. He will quiet you in His love. *He will rejoice over you with singing.*" Does this suggest that

perhaps God experiences joy? Is this a human-like quality? In fact, true joy is, first of all, a fruit of the Holy Spirit—originally, an attribute of God.⁸³

Jeremiah 48:31 says, “I will wail for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; I will mourn for the men of Kir Heres. O vine of Sibmah! I will weep for you...” If we fail to see that God can feel pain, even deeper pain than our own, how shall we ever come into sympathy with Him?

And God appreciates being appreciated. Just as our human nature needs appreciation, God needs to hear from us that we're thankful to Him. He needs to hear something other than constant demands—unrelenting battering at the door of His throne room to *get* what we can out of Him. No intelligent relationship can survive on this, where one sees the other as a resource solely for his or her own benefit. How many friendships, how many marriages, have dissolved due to simple lack of appreciation? God is a real Being with real emotions and real companionship desires and needs. He wants to be known and understood and appreciated for who He is, besides the innumerable blessings He brings to our lives. If we fail to look through the veil that separates time and eternity to perceive an intelligent, emotional Being on the throne of the universe, if we neglect to acknowledge what He does for us day to day, what kind of incentive does He have to keep on blessing?

I would even go so far as to suggest that humans raise their thoughts and voices to Him in thanksgiving, even if they don't have the feelings to go with it. Express thanksgiving; express appreciation, and the feelings will come.

Most of us have experienced needs that only God can fill. Can we entertain the idea that perhaps He Himself has a need that only *we* can fill? For some thousands of years now He has observed the misery existing on planet earth. Is it possible He *strongly* desires to bring it to an end? Can He end it any time He wants? No, He cannot end it until all issues of the great conflict of the ages are eternally settled, and now only one remains. The final issue is whether or not humans can do the “impossible”—obey Him. He proposes to settle it in a final confrontation between His champions and the forces of evil. He needs a remnant people who understand His need and willingly enter in—in His defense. He needs a remnant who know the “how-to” of their role in His plan, who willingly surrender and allow Him to fill them with the practice of righteousness.

Today conventional wisdom sees God as a celestial Santa Claus to ignore most of the time, although perhaps one day in the year we may have a need that moves us to call out to Him. But to most it is unnecessary, even embarrassing, to suggest full surrender and a total commitment to Him. Most of the time He remains in the background, subject to disrespect, His

holy name spoken as a common curse word, His clear commands ignored. We do not see Him as a Being with feelings and purposes and a plan whose success requires some earnest human participation. Today He reaches out to humans on this planet. He gave us free will. This He will never compromise. Would we have it any other way? As He gave His only begotten Son to meet our needs, are we willing to let Him lead us and make us His champions in His final battle with sin and evil? This, you see, is what He needs from us. In exchange He gives us His "exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these [we] may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."⁸⁴

But can we expect Him to show interest in our needs, when we show no interest in His?

THE BATTLE FOR THE MIND

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

George opened the door and headed out to the Green Belt, a paved trail that hugged the local river for over thirty miles, continued straight through the heart of downtown and into outlying regions of maple, poplar, and Russian olive trees. Leafy branches reached high over a jungle of undergrowth and fallen brush. He liked to walk this trail as often as his busy schedule allowed. When he looked upon the area's rich beauty, with its watery inlets and swift-flowing river between dark, foliage-covered banks, he had to lift his heart in thanks to God, for he lived close to it; he needed no vehicle to access this choice area.

Fallen logs and uprooted bushes rested among the growing vegetation. Even some branches on some of the standing trees had died stretched out like great, reaching claws, stabbing the air as if to catch a careless bird and do it harm. George saw a certain beauty, even in this macabre reminder of death. What can I learn from this forest scene, he wondered? They say nature will teach you, if you listen.

As he walked and pondered day-by-day, he seemed to see in this primeval forest evidence of struggle between two minds. The same mind that created the beautiful, lush plant life could not be responsible for all the evidence of death. But somehow the creative mind overruled the death mind for purposes of mercy, as dead branches decayed back into the soil to produce new life at some unknown distant future.

Two minds; one producing life; one officiating over death. George thought of his own life history and seemed to see in it evidence of two minds, one lifting him higher, making him a better person, and the other dragging him downward into the corrupt and foolish pathway of regret. Was there a struggle for him as well?

What Scripture Says

"Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness." "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment."⁸⁵

Scripture calls this earth the great battle zone of the conflict between the fallen angel, Lucifer, and the living God.⁸⁶ That struggle often manifests in awesome and destructive outbursts of nature, in many of the corrupt attitudes and arrangements of society, in centrifugal forces in families, in the separation inherent in death.

But reduced to its lowest terms, the great conflict begins *within the minds* of individual members of the human family. Free will reigns. Humans get the master they choose to obey—a law more unbending than the laws of the Medes and Persians. Whatever direction we ultimately travel flows out of the choices we make in the everyday—choices rooted in our worldview, in our understandings about ourselves and about the meaning of life. If we harbor error there, those choices can take us where we would fain not go.

Clearly, the battlefield of the great conflict between Christ the Creator and Satan the destroyer exists between human ears in the realm of some of the greatest mysteries on planet earth—the human mind. Let us look, then, at some of the dimensions of mind that play a part in this great battle.

Mind

Mind begins with the brain, but the brain does not fully account for mind. The brain consists of two hemispheres—right and left—housed inside the human skull. The convoluted bumpy surface of the brain—the cerebral cortex—further houses the frontal lobes—seat of self-awareness, intuition, the ability to plan and other activities that raise humans above the animals; the motor control area; association areas; parietal lobes and occipital lobes; each section performing a specific role in enabling humans to function normally in life. The frontal lobes, situated just inside the forehead, enable us to learn, to weigh matters, to evaluate options, to reason and make choices, giving little or no thought to the fact that we are thinking. Generally, the

only awareness accompanying these activities is that we are conscious of saying and doing; we have memories of these things.

But perhaps the most intriguing and mysterious elements of the human mind exist below the threshold of awareness. The nonconscious—or subconscious or unconscious, as it is alternately called—affects our lives in profound ways science has just in about the last thirty years begun to take seriously and to explore. The nonconscious controls dreaming and the innumerable involuntary functions required to maintain the human body, such as heart beat, cellular activity and so forth.

The presence in humans of nonconscious is so thoroughly documented today to deny it betrays the highest order of ignorance. Frank Tallis, in *Hidden Minds: A History of the Unconscious*, calls it as real as granite or the sun.⁸⁷

We do not usually notice when the nonconscious takes over from the conscious mind. Nonconscious, by definition, means insensible, oblivious, without awareness. But the reality of the nonconscious came home to me in a dramatic way not long ago. In the early morning, I became aware that I was waking out of a dream. In the dream I heard a distant workman pounding nails in a steady pattern. As I awoke, the sound stopped. But it began again, as I drifted back into the edges of nonconsciousness. Both in and out of the dream, I realized what was happening; therefore, I maintained a measure of consciousness while drifting across the border into nonconsciousness, an exceedingly rare experience.

In the late nineteenth century, Marie-Jean Hervey de Saint-Denis, literature and Chinese language teacher at the College of France, cured a recurring nightmare through a technique that eventually became known as “lucid dreaming.”⁸⁸ He learned to confront the monsters in his dreams, to view them academically. As he did so, he watched them transform into soft, unthreatening entities.

Some contemporary psychologists teach lucid dreaming to those who are similarly afflicted with nightmares. Subjects learn to say “I must be dreaming” during waking periods of beta consciousness. They will eventually develop the ability to say “I must be dreaming” during *nonconscious* nightmares. Confronting the threatening scenes with these words changes dreamers’ perceptions and allows them to reshape their dream environment into something more benign.

Insights From Research

But complete lack of awareness in nonconscious processes is by far the norm; therefore, researching it presents formidable challenges. How does one

effectively study an area beyond the threshold of awareness? Researchers have developed some clever and innovative ways to overcome this hurdle.

In one study, surgical patients at a hospital were anesthetized. After the surgeon began his incision, someone read a list of names to the patient. As the reading concluded before suturing, no question remained as to the patient's level of consciousness.

Once the patient fully awoke, he or she listened to another list of names—a list containing randomly distributed names from the first list. They were asked to identify any they felt they might have heard before, thus the name of the study—False Fame. In both the initial and subsequent studies these individuals identified a statistically significant number of the names read to them while under anesthesia,⁸⁹ showing the existence of a level of awareness beyond human consciousness. Somehow the information “got in,” even though subjects were completely unconscious.

In a 1951 study by R. S. Lazarus and R. A. McCleary subjects viewed a set of meaningless syllables. Each syllable consisted of a consonant, a vowel, and a consonant; for example, “jod,” “ler,” “daj,” etc. As they observed each syllable, they received an electric shock. Researchers then intermingled the syllables with another group of similar syllables that subjects had not seen. As subjects viewed the new list, although electric shock was not administered this time, when they again saw a syllable previously accompanied by electric shock, a polygraph recorded a higher level of anxiety than with the other syllables through measuring sweat gland activity. Somehow the subjects had “learned” stress associated with the first set of syllables.⁹⁰

Tallis states that:

The most recent and scientifically supported method of communicating with the unconscious is subliminal stimulation. This technique conventionally involves the very short presentation (for five milliseconds or less) of messages or instructions. These presentations are so brief that they are not registered consciously, but nevertheless seem to enter and bias the processing systems of the brain.⁹¹

While this method has become standard among researchers, other means of accessing and studying nonconscious exist. For example, Pawel Lewicki, Thomas Hill (both of University of Tulsa) and Maria Czyzewska (Southwest Texas State University) report the following interesting experiment.

Subjects were asked to track an X on a computer screen and to predict where it would next appear. The X moved about between four quadrants in an apparently random pattern. However, the appearances were not truly random but appeared in an exceedingly complex design.

After a relatively short period of trying, subjects began achieving significantly high success ratings. However, a little later, the pattern became truly random, and their success rates fell dramatically. When asked why their competence had fallen, they tended to answer that they had become tired or bored. Some thought they had received a subliminal message that blocked their ability to perform the test. Clearly, none of the subjects consciously understood what had taken place in the experiment. They did not know the X moved in a complex pattern at first. They did not realize they had learned the pattern without knowing it. They did not realize the X then began moving randomly. Everything took place in the nonconscious region of the mind, while they sought an explanation within the context of their conscious experience.

In a study called “perceptual defense” researchers placed a divider between the right and left halves of subjects’ faces. The purpose of the research, so subjects were told, was to determine how long it took to perceive a beam of focused light slowly brightening from darkness into one of their eyes; therefore, the eye receiving the beam of light received their full attention. Unbeknownst to subjects, the other eye was receiving subliminal stimulation in the form of words—some neutral, but some quite emotion charged, such as “cancer” or a vulgarity. Subjects’ only duty was to identify the moment when they perceived the light in their eye.

By a statistically significant margin, the results showed that subjects needed a fraction of a moment longer to see the light, when the emotion-charged word was subliminally flashed into their other eye. They were defending themselves against taking in these “threatening” words.

Does the nonconscious exist? Study after study confirms it does. Our world today is awash in wildly bizarre claims regarding the nonconscious. Its mystery has led some to speculate that anything is possible and to formulate daring claims and assert miraculous possibilities involving the nonconscious. But what do we really know? Although research in this area suggests humanity stands at the very beginning of knowledge of the nonconscious, clinicians have demonstrated repeatedly and incontrovertibly that subliminal input can alter behavior. Current findings—what we now know—indicate that humans who fail to take into account and cooperate with this “hidden intelligence,”⁹² as it is often called, approach life with a decided disadvantage.

History of the Nonconscious

Research into the nonconscious today is to the field of psychology what the flight of the Wright Brothers is to the field of aviation. Scientists do not yet understand how the nonconscious works. Although some theories exist, they

do not yet know where the brain or seat of the nonconscious resides.⁹³ But they are making great strides in understanding this phenomenon, the recorded history of which goes back at least to Augustine, whose writings express some comprehension of the existence of nonconscious mental processes.⁹⁴

Great artists and writers such as Schiller, Goethe, Mozart, Coleridge, and Blake claim to have produced works without conscious effort.⁹⁵ With such a powerful creative tool as the nonconscious known to exist, it hardly seems strange that humans have sought a means of prying open its resistant covering to make it serve their ends. The wide use of opium among eighteenth century intelligentsia, some confessed, was to break down the barrier to the effortless creativity of the deeper mind.

In 1690 John Locke published his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, describing how the mind assembles knowledge. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz answered with a critique, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, published years later in 1765. The latter contained a section on the nonconscious processing of knowledge. Although, before him, Augustine, Montaigne, and Descartes had referenced nonconscious mental processes in their writings, Leibniz's work was the first detailed statement on the subject.

Some speculate that growing interest in the nonconscious may have led to the demise of the Age of Enlightenment and commencement of the Romantic Era, when many writers and artists turned the world's attention back to humanity, to the individual, to his potential for achievement presumably through harnessing the powers of the nonconscious. Out of this milieu came Sigmund Freud, who, in the late nineteenth century, spearheaded the drive to bring awareness of the nonconscious into the mainstream, asserting its superiority over the conscious mind. "The unconscious is the larger sphere, which includes within it the smaller sphere of the conscious," he said.⁹⁶ He and others asserted consciousness as a component of the nonconscious, rather than the reverse.

From Freud's day to our own, study of the nonconscious has crossed many frontiers. From semi-respectable tittering over sexual innuendos, to three-ring circus advertising applications, to objective presentation by responsible and respected researchers, it is as if in the great scheme of things knowledge of the role of the nonconscious in human personality is a subject whose time has finally come.

Tallis states:

These are exciting times. With the advent of brain-scanning technology it is now possible to map the brain. Already the geography of the unconscious has been illuminated by the fallout of colliding sub-atomic particles. Many brain scan images—showing brightly lit areas of biological activity—are nothing

less than snapshots of the unconscious at work. Preconscious processes, rapidly assembling the infrastructure of personality.

The unconscious, only recently rejected as a historical curiosity, has made its way back to the heart of neuroscience. It is now widely recognized that without a thorough understanding of unconscious processes in the brain we will never have a thorough understanding of ourselves. Once again, the unconscious is an idea with a future...⁹⁷

The Nonconscious In Scripture

If, in fact, a nonconscious mind exists, evidence for such should appear in Scripture. I have often wondered, for example, why Scripture uses both the word “mind” and “heart” to refer to the same thing. Without a specific understanding of Biblical cultures, I have come to wonder if perhaps “mind” refers to the surface or conscious mind and “heart” refers to the entirety of that which we call mind, both conscious and nonconscious aspects.

Here are some Biblical statements that suggest the existence of more than mere surface mind:

The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the inner depths of his heart.⁹⁸

The spirit or attitude of the human reveals whether there is connection with the eternal God, while He searches as with a lamp the remote regions of the mind.

Blows that hurt cleanse away evil, as do stripes the inner depths of the heart.⁹⁹

The bad experiences of life, if correctly received, assist to cleanse the deeper levels of mind from evil.

Yes, my inmost being will rejoice, when your lips speak right things.¹⁰⁰

When we hear our friends and loved ones begin speaking the wonderful language of heaven, it causes our mind, our inmost being—nonconscious as well as conscious—to rejoice!

I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night seasons.¹⁰¹

Does God speak to the nonconscious in His still small voice in the quiet moments of the night, perhaps when we are most relaxed from the cares of the day? Does He instruct us through dreams, which are the exclusive province of the nonconscious? Have we ever awakened with the solution to a problem on our mind?

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.¹⁰²

Again, we confront a mystery. What are the “inward parts,” the “hidden part” where wisdom resides? Could they refer to the nonconscious, which contemporary research increasingly confirms as truly existing?

“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”¹⁰³

What is the “inner man” where Christ dwells in persons of faith? Is it possible that in a way not understood (or perhaps understandable by humans) the nonconscious in humans functions as the initial point of connection between the human and the divine?

Connection Between Speaking and Deeper Mind

Much Scriptural evidence exists, also, that speaking functions as a primary method of “educating” the deeper or nonconscious mind. Here are some samples:

For this commandment which I command you today, it is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should *say*, “Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?” Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should *say*, “Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?” But the word is very near you, in your *mouth* and in your *heart*, that you may do it.¹⁰⁴

And these *words* which I command you today shall be in your *heart*: you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.¹⁰⁵

The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body.¹⁰⁶

As food nourishes the body, so words nourish the mind—both conscious and nonconscious aspects. What kind of words do we “eat” and thus “feed” our mind in both its conscious and nonconscious dimensions? How do we have “truth in the inward parts?” “Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.”¹⁰⁷

That Christ Might Dwell In the Heart

Scripture clearly states that humans are a temple for the Holy Spirit. "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."¹⁰⁸ But is it real or only a figure of speech?

What are we to understand from such statements as the following?

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?"

Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. . . . *"The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."*¹⁰⁹

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."¹¹⁰

Eating the flesh of the Son of man, drinking His blood—powerful imagery indeed to convey the reality of God's presence in the believer through the Spirit and the word. As food nourishes the body, the word nourishes the connection of Mind with mind. Abiding in Him. These symbols represent association, intimacy, a knowledge of the other's purposes and goals, an understanding, a sympathy, a rapport, and support. How are we to understand such metaphors for closeness? Is the experience real? If it is, the nonconscious mind almost certainly plays a significant role in it.

Dangers Relating To Nonconscious

As the existence of a nonconscious mind became more widely known, interest in accessing it grew. Opium use raged throughout the eighteenth century artistic community, as members sought access to their nonconscious and that one perfect work they could thereby create effortlessly. Samuel Coleridge's poetic fragment, "Xanadu," reportedly came into being in this fashion. With the discovery of hypnotism in the late eighteenth century, many researchers felt they now had the tool they needed to pry open the secrets of the nonconscious aspect of mind.

However, as researchers moved ahead, applying hypnosis as a tool to access the nonconscious, hypnotized individuals began reporting receiving spirit communications. The age exploded in spiritualistic phenomena, causing many respectable scientists to drop their interest in researching in this area.

Those who continued soon realized that hypnosis disables the human will. Hypnotized subjects have turned over their will to the hypnotist, who now acts as mind for them. Since practitioners can plant posthypnotic suggestions that activate during waking hours, with no conscious awareness on the part of the subject, the dangers of allowing oneself to be hypnotized cannot be too strongly stated. It would be consummately high-risk behavior to allow another being access to such a vulnerable area of one's life. God has established certain laws of the nonconscious, just as He has over other aspects of our being. We enjoy the life He has given us when we cooperate with those laws. But when we do not; for example, when we seek access to our nonconscious in ways outside His laws of the mind, He cannot protect us. Our mind is too critical a part of our being to deliberately expose to satanic mischief.

Hypnosis seems to open up the deeper regions of the mind and makes them vulnerable to dark forces from the invisible world; therefore, it cannot be too strongly stated that allowing oneself to be hypnotized is behavior far beyond risky.

For purposes of this work be assured, no such access is recommended. Rather, we need only know that it exists and what Scripture says regarding the role of the nonconscious in the life of faith.

Kingdom of God Is Within

Scripture reports an interaction between Christ and some of the religious leaders of His day in which they inquired as to when the kingdom of God would come. Their preconceptions led them to expect a physical kingdom on earth, the outcome of a victorious conquest of the powerful Roman Empire. Surely, if Jesus were the Christ He would know about it. This model was the

basic unit of their Messianic hopes. If Jesus were the Christ, surely He could deliver on this expectation.

But Jesus surprised them. He didn't deny His Messianic claim, nor did He deny He came to set up a new kingdom. But, He said, it's not about geography. It's about mind. "The kingdom of God is within you," He said.¹¹¹ Was it literal? Did He mean to suggest that before He can take us to the eternal city of Zion, we must host, as a temple, the Shekinah that once filled the Most Holy Place of Israel's ancient tabernacle?

Yes, there will be a literal kingdom. Yes, its citizens will "inherit the earth."¹¹² But first it's about the mind in all its conscious and nonconscious aspects. It's about filling it full of the nourishment of truth as set out in the inspired word. It's about making a home within the human in which the powerful Holy Spirit can set up His eternal throne.¹¹³

THE CREATIVE LANGUAGE OF HEAVEN

"[My word] shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it"
(Isaiah 55:11).

The radio talk show created a diversion, as Betty waited in her car for her friend, Donna, to return home. The tall evergreens in the front yard provided some shade from the blistering summer sun; nevertheless, after an hour or so of waiting, Betty became restless. Maybe she didn't need to talk to her friend today after all. She tired of turning the engine on and off, but she knew not to run down the car battery, as she played the radio. The peaceful moments also gave some opportunity for reflection, contemplation, and prayer as she waited. But as the day began to fade, Betty decided she had more pressing matters waiting at home. Because the engine was turned off at the moment, Betty gave the key a crank. This time the engine did not roar into life. All she got was a "click."

Oh, no. What have I done, she wondered. She tried the engine several more times. It would not start, although it had started easily before. What could be wrong, she wondered.

Since she lived within a mile, she left the car locked and set off on foot. How much is this going to cost, she wondered. And where will I take it. She remembered all the times she had taken her car to repair shops not knowing if the repairs or charges were correct or needed. She had no special place to

take her car at the moment. How would she know where to take it? And the extra expense, ugh! As she walked along, these questions depressed her spirits.

Suddenly a thought occurred to her. She had been studying the exercise of faith in her private devotions. This emergency might be a chance to use those principles. She thought of it as "theory" and "lab." If she related to it right, this could be a "lab" opportunity.

She needed a promise but couldn't think of one specifically applying to car repairs. Therefore, she decided to claim Romans 8:28, her general, all-purpose promise: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

She walked toward home only slightly aware that passers-by might think she was talking to herself. She tried to be discreet, but the matter was of too great importance for much caution. She prayed as she walked, "Oh, Lord, thank you for this beautiful day and for your love. Thank you for my good health, for peace and tranquility around me today. Thank you for being the kind heavenly Father that you are. You know what happened to my car. It won't start, and I don't know what's wrong with it, don't know who to take it to and can't afford the extra expense.

"But you've promised that all things work together for good to those who love you, who are called according to your purpose. I therefore receive and claim that promise and praise you for it. I don't know how this matter will resolve, but I know it will work to my good overall, for you have promised." As she prayed, she felt her heart lighten and a wonderful peace encompass her. She knew God had the case, and however it resolved would be okay.

And she continued praising God, as she walked the mile to her home. She eventually reached Donna by phone that evening to explain why her car was sitting outside Donna's house. Otherwise, Betty hardly thought of the matter. Next day she arose and went about her duties until suddenly she stopped short. She knew what was wrong with the car. She did not know how she knew, nor did she know how long she had known. It was as if she had always known. Maybe she had heard the phrase from one of her mechanic brothers at some time in the distant past, though she didn't know what it meant. The thought in her mind, almost without benefit of words, was "The car is vapor locked and will be okay when it cools down. Walk back and get it when you can." And she did.

Creative Speaking

The principles of creative speaking have existed from the day God breathed life into our first parents. No doubt Adam and Eve effortlessly exercised

those principles in the most loving, uplifting, supportive way. But the fall changed that, as it changed so many other things. Now human minds more naturally speak out of circumstances. Yet words still have power to create, as we “eat” them, receive them, “swallow” them into the deepest level of our mind and heart.

In every element of human likeness to God, that likeness is on a greatly reduced and inferior plane; i.e., His physical being contrasted with our physical being, His emotional vulnerability versus our emotional makeup, His ability to create life compared with our ability to create life. This holds true also of the creative aspect of our speaking. We, of course, cannot create living things from nothing, as God can, but by exercising creative speech we can build happy spouses; wonderful, productive children; contented pets; a healthy, well-ordered life—and, best of all, union with our Maker—by speaking in harmony with that vision.¹¹⁴

In fact, our speaking is perhaps the primary creator of the atmosphere that encircles each of us. We’ve all associated with individuals who spoke very little. How did it make us feel? Scripture says, “A man of understanding holds his peace”; and “He who has knowledge spares his words . . . Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive” (Proverbs 11:12; 17:27, 28).¹¹⁵ A humble contemporary bromide attributed to Mark Twain says the same: “It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt.” Still, we often feel uncomfortable in the presence of a quiet person; we question whether they might dislike us or have negative feelings toward us. We sometimes wonder where we stand with them. Perhaps then, while talking less has its advantages, we also can see the wisdom of learning better principles of speaking, to utilize the best words; words that are uplifting, supportive, encouraging, creative, nurturing, wise—while also spare? We *must* speak, for it is *when we speak* that our world begins to understand who we are.

We can, largely through our speaking, create an atmosphere of heavenly grace about us or an atmosphere of spiritual, emotional, and physical toxicity. “Negativity is psychic dirt,” says one commentator,¹¹⁶ pointing out that words can destroy lives as readily as they can heal them. “You’re going to grow up to kill someone and spend your life in prison,” says a parent to a child.

Often, parents do not listen to what they say to their children. They fail to understand the creative nature of their words.

“What a good little guy you are,” says another to *her* child. “You’re going to grow up to be such a solid citizen.”

What’s going to happen to those children in their futures? We’ve not understood the power of the “you are’s” we give our children—or the

potential of the “you are’s” we have withheld. Children have no idea who they are, until they see it in their parents’ eyes and hear it in their speech.

Blessing the Children

The three synoptic gospel writers¹¹⁷ record the tender story of mothers bringing their children to Jesus for His blessing. The disciples felt such activity beneath the Master’s notice and tried to discourage them. But Jesus quickly came to the mothers’ aid, again showing Himself approachable to the humble elements of society. While the story shows the consistently beautiful nature of Jesus’ character, perhaps there is more to the story than lies on the surface. Does it mean to tell the importance of the quality of words spoken to our children?

Since time began it was a practice among God’s servants to bless their children. Although the practice of pronouncing blessings upon others appears to be of great antiquity,¹¹⁸ Scripture first introduces it as it pertains to children in Genesis 27, where the elderly Isaac expresses his intent to pronounce a blessing upon his first son, Esau, before the patriarch’s death. That blessing contained the transfer of both material and spiritual benefits, and, while the youthful Esau traded the anticipated blessing off to his wily brother, Jacob, for a mess of pottage, by the time Isaac saw fit to bestow it, it appears to have become far more valuable to Esau. Now he wanted it.

But Jacob received the father’s choice blessing, and the years passed. When the death of Jacob himself drew near, he called his twelve sons together and bestowed on each a blessing based upon their characters and life histories.¹¹⁹ That blessing appears to have endured through time, for in Revelation 7:1-8 we find an angel sealing the last generation of God’s servants with the seal of one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Many Scriptural examples could be cited of parents laying hands upon the heads of their children and pronouncing a blessing on them. The practice existed among the early Christians. Ordination to the gospel ministry then and now includes the practice of laying hands upon candidates and pronouncing both a blessing and a “charge” upon them.¹²⁰ Among religious groups in our modern times, the practice of pronouncing a blessing upon the children still exists among orthodox Jews and Latter-day Saints, both groups prominent for their prosperity.

Some groups dedicate infants to the Lord, but the parental blessing upon the children is something different. The children should be old enough to understand what the blessing entails. They should have enough years on them that the parents have had time to observe their strengths, weaknesses, and interests—to watch them grow—and the blessing should take all these

factors into account. The blessing is a sort of life blueprint that instills in the child a sense of direction. Something roughly comparable to a *bar mitzveh* could be scheduled specifically to pronounce the blessing upon one child. The blessing could be pronounced, and the child given a plaque containing the wording of the blessing. The plaque could then be hung in the child's room for him or her to read and ponder while growing to adulthood.

The healing power of words of blessing are not reserved to children only. They apply to spouses as well. Spouses have no idea how their other half feels about them, without some words to go on. How much does it cost us to find something sincere and positive to say to our children or to our mate, recognizing that in our words we are creating or destroying that precious bond that humans naturally long to build with other humans? "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."¹²¹ We are creating or destroying the lives of others with the nature of our words to them. Abusive words fired out to others in our world tend to bounce back and damage the life of the speaker. Remember the saying, "If mama aint happy, aint nobody happy?" Is it in our interest to serve the happiness of those around us, in speaking as well as in other ways?

A husband, exasperated at his wife's unrelenting inquiries as to whether or not he loved her, finally replied, "I told you once I love you. If I change my mind I'll let you know." What kind of relationship is growing here?

Growing Our Union With God

We speak the language of death by nature. Today's television reinforces it by modeling to us the language of death. We have to *learn* to speak the creative, healing language of heaven.

The language of heaven is simply humans rejoicing in expressing agreement with God. Our circumstances at the moment have nothing to do with it. Where do we hear *God* speaking? In His word. His word still creates in our lives, if we believe and receive it. Speaking the word gives it creative power, as that very act of speaking, re-phrasing His word to mean "*me*," applying it to "*my*" situation, and rejoicing that *it is so*, is like the football quarterback handing off the ball to the halfback. As we express confidence in the power of God's word to create in our lives, we "hand off the ball" to the Holy Spirit, and now we can trust that He will act in accordance with the word. Then our job is to rest. To know now that God has the case, and whatever the outcome, it is the outcome we would choose if we knew the end from the beginning. God has promised, "Open your mouth *wide*, and I will fill it."¹²² We have opened our mouth, expressing *confidence* in God's love for us, in His power, His ability, and His intention to fulfill His word. Where before we may have

spoken more often *of* God, it now becomes natural to speak *to* Him; “He and I” transitions to “You and I.” Can you see the difference? Even our thoughts subdue to where, when a mean or negative thought occurs, it startles us; we find ourselves praying, oh, Lord, forgive me for thinking in that tone of voice. Gradually confidence in God’s word and praise to Him becomes the norm and overrides our fixation on circumstances.

“You are holy who *inhabit* the praises of Israel,”¹²³ says the Lord. As we wait for God’s outcome, we do not abandon God. Praise enables us to stay connected to Him, to continue our expressions of confidence in Him, while we “stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.”¹²⁴ Our words of confidence, our prayers and praise, give God authority in a situation that otherwise the enemy might contest as being within *his* jurisdiction. When we have prayed, claiming the word, believing we have received,¹²⁵ praising Him that it is so, God keeps a written record of our words and can point them out to Satan as giving heaven authority in the situation and thereby banish him from interference.

A sick lady had almost lost hope. At one point of great illness she felt a profound depression descending upon her, telling her she would never again leave her sick bed. But overriding the depression these words entered her mind: “Now you lie here, and count your blessings.” At the time she didn’t think she had many but began counting them anyway. She fell asleep as though wrapped in a blanket of peace. And though it took awhile, she gradually got better.

We *cannot* build bonds with the Lord through constant statements of our need and/or prayer tantrums demanding service. Bonds are not built that way. Because as humans we understand how words of appreciation make us feel, we can perhaps project from that how words of confidence and appreciation make God feel. They are fetching. They appeal. They change the “praiser’s” mind down at the very depths where humanity begins, in the deepest part of our mysterious mind and heart. In fact, it appears that praise and appreciation of God’s goodness open a door in the soul and invite the Holy Spirit into its inmost chambers. God cannot stay away. Just as we cannot forge oneness with humans by exclusively *taking* from them, we cannot forge oneness with God by exclusively using Him. His *agape*, His core nature, leads Him to give us life and to provide for us, but He did not create us solely with that in mind. His goal is fellowship. Our needs are His gifts to us through which this fellowship can grow. Unless we learn this, our lives can diminish into a “slough of despond” and fade out before we have even begun to live.

The Weapon of Praise

Praise, in fact, is one of our *most potent* weapons of faith. Scripture says we are engaged in a mortal fight with an invisible foe. Lucifer began as an honored angel of heaven, but he became proud, aspired to be God, was evicted from heaven with one-third of the angels, and became Satan. He and his minions constantly seek to goad us and/or damage our lives in some way. The good angels surround and protect us.

Through praise we create an environment in the invisible world that does two desirable things:

1. It attracts holy angels, who love to hear God praised, an activity permeating the very atmosphere of heaven. Because it is less common on earth, when holy angels hear it, we may imagine them flocking in from all directions to listen. And where holy angels are, there is protection, provision, blessings, and the unnumbered good things they bring to earth in their hands from the throne of God.
2. It repels demons. Just as certain atmospheres do not appeal to us, demons do not like to spend much time where folk are praising God. It reminds them of heaven, a place from which they are forever barred. Nothing is more calculated to depress and discourage demons than sincere praise to God from the lips of His obedient children.

When we begin incorporating these principles into our life, an interesting side benefit occurs. Where once we might slip into evil surmising, accusation, gossip, and other negative verbalizations without even realizing it, developing the habit of creative, heavenly speaking makes one almost immediately aware of the moment speaking becomes destructive. Staying on the positive side creates in the mind and in the environment the wholesome, healing atmosphere in which we all want to live.

But God's word cannot create lying on a coffee table or sitting on a bookshelf. It must be opened, read, stored in the deeper mind, and claimed by faith with rejoicing.

Our Inner Tape

We do not speak orally only. Far greater amounts of speaking take place in our thoughts every waking moment of the day. Some have compared thinking to a mental audiotape. Recurring themes, recurring attitudes, cycle in our mind throughout the day. Unless we have come to understand the principles of heavenly speaking, it is likely that much of that tape contains the negative, destructive "psychic dirt" referred to earlier. We speak as easily

and far more often on our mental tape than we do orally. As the principles of heavenly speaking become habitual in our actual verbalizations, they come to seat themselves on that tape as well and become the truth encompassed by both our surface and deeper mind, which form the “operating system” out of which our lives flow. Healing and health can only exist where thoughts on that mental tape rest on the hopeful side.

But a danger exists regarding speaking, as a number of contemporary prosperity gurus teach it; that is, in their obsession with self-esteem. I have heard them encouraging followers to brag on themselves so as to build self-confidence. Tell yourself you’re smart, that you are creative, that you have abilities, that folks are fortunate to know you, they counsel. However, Scripture cautions against such an approach in describing Satan’s view of himself: “[Y]ou have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High’” (Isaiah 14:13,14). Christianity generally agrees these words come from Lucifer, the fallen angel, enemy of God. This type of thinking and speaking, whether oral or on our mental tape, betrays its origin and thus raises the red flag of danger. Our world today is awash in the cry for “self-esteem,” yet a number of contemporary voices warn of its danger.¹²⁶

What am I suggesting? Are we to allow our thoughts to put us down? Certainly, that would be equally dishonoring to God. Ideally, as in the case of Jesus, self vanishes in our ministry to those around us. This condition, true humility, doesn’t think of itself in any excessive way, and certainly not to build up or tear down. True maturity, genuine self-respect, consists of the ability to address the needs of every day, minimally concerned about esteem—up, down or sideways. This is true freedom.

What does all this verbalization do for us or for the world, then? It connects our soul to the One to whom our problems are dust in the wind. It binds us to Him in a fellowship of joy and appreciation, as He looms ever larger in the quiet of each day. The speaking that overcomes the “dragon”¹²⁷ magnifies Christ and brings Him into our consciousness in constantly increasing fullness.

The Steps

Breaking this down to a formula, here are the steps to heavenly thinking and speaking:

Step 1. It is essential to, first, understand that *what we focus on grows*. The more energy and thought we apply to a subject, the bigger it gets in our life. What will that subject be: Praise and thanksgiving for God's good gifts or murmuring over the imperfections that still exist? We determine whether our focus will grow good things or whether it will take us down into the entrapment of the slough. We decide what we will focus on—our own circumstances, trials, and tribulations or God's wonderful promises of deliverance.

Step 2. Find God's promises that address your needs. Re-phrase them so they speak specifically of you. Here is an example: Suppose you're concerned for your children's salvation. You might want to re-phrase Scripture to say, "I thank You and give You praise, Lord, for saving my children, John and Mary;¹²⁸ thank You that they're taught of You, and great is their peace and prosperity."¹²⁹

Step 3. The next step seems obvious but can be difficult for some. Open the mouth in praise to God. Appreciate His goodness. Count His blessings. When the old thought patterns reappear and try to bring you down, block them with another powerful dose of praise and thanksgiving to God. As much as possible without appearing "strange," do this exercise aloud. Remember, *your ears are listening*. The more they hear it, the more you'll believe it.

An Example

Charles Fitch, a Presbyterian minister prominent in the Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century,¹³⁰ when challenged as to whether he believed in sinless living in this life, gave this reply:

My God has sworn that He will grant me, that I, being delivered out of the hand of my enemies, may serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of my life; and He has raised up Jesus Christ to be my horn of salvation, to perform to me this mercy promised to our fathers, to remember this holy covenant, this oath which He sware. I therefore expect through the strength and faithfulness of my Lord Jesus Christ, in performing to me this holy covenant and oath of God, to be delivered out of the hand of my enemies, and to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of my life. I expect that He, according to His own promise, will be faithful to sanctify me wholly, and to preserve my whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In myself I am nothing but a miserable, lost sinner; but in my Saviour "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"; and He has made me "complete in

Him" (Col. 2:9, 10). I therefore expect to "abide in Him"; and "whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not."¹³¹

Notice how Fitch defends himself by the word of God alone. This paragraph, replete in the words of Scripture, is excised out of a larger work where this pattern prevails throughout. Notice, he *rephrases* the word of God to apply specifically to himself. Here is the paragraph showing some of the changes he has made in order to accomplish this:

My God has sworn that He will grant me [us], that I [we], being delivered out of the hand of my [our] enemies, may serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of my [our] life; and He has raised up Jesus Christ to be my [our] horn of salvation, to perform [to me—new] this mercy promised to our fathers, to remember this holy covenant, this oath which He swore. I therefore expect through the strength and faithfulness of my Lord Jesus Christ, in performing to me [to our fathers] this holy covenant and oath of God, to be delivered out of the hand of my [our] enemies, and to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of my [our] life. I expect that He, according to His own promise, will be faithful to sanctify me [you] wholly, and to preserve my [your] whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In myself I am nothing but a miserable, lost sinner; but in my Saviour "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"; and He has made me [you] "complete in Him" (Col. 2:9, 10). I therefore expect to "abide in Him"; and "whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not (1 John 3:6)."

Check out these changes for yourself in Luke 1:69-75; Micah 4:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24.

In like manner it is possible to establish and build up *communion with God* through this means. Suppose the need we especially feel is to know that God has forgiven and "accepted" us in Christ. Using Fitch's paragraph as a base, we might rephrase it as follows:

My God and Father, I thank You and give You praise that You have sworn and will deliver me from my enemies that I may serve You without fear, in holiness and righteousness before You all the days of my life. I worship You that You have raised up Jesus my horn of salvation, to give me this mercy promised to our fathers, to remember this holy covenant, this oath which You made. [etc.]

He may even have expressed confidence that the work *had already been done*, as follows:

I know through the strength and faithfulness of Jesus, in performing to me this holy covenant and oath, that I *am* delivered out of the hand of my enemies, to serve You without fear, in Christ's holiness and righteousness before You,

all the days of my life. I know that You, according to Your own promise, *now* sanctify me wholly, and preserve my whole spirit and soul and body blameless, unto the coming of Jesus.

What justification would Fitch have for praising God that the need was already fulfilled?¹³² Because He “calls those things which do not exist as though they did.”¹³³ God’s word creates the thing it says, and such expressions as these merely agree with God that *it is so*. I cannot doubt that Fitch spent many lovely hours in God’s presence, in just such communion with Him. There is something about praying the word of God back to Him in confidence that brings the soul close to Him, that fills the being with a peace unknown in common hours.

The Creative Word of God

How did God create the world? Through His word. This is Christian Theology 101. But we have failed to understand that His word—that treasure so abundant today on our bookshelves that it appears almost common—still creates as surely as it did millennia ago, when “by the word of the Lord the heavens were made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. . . . He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”¹³⁴ He waits for us to understand that His word has the same power today as it did back then. He waits to see us dust off our old Bible, open it, read it, and start believing it by putting it into our minds and praising Him that *it is so*.

As many homes today, the home of John and Darlene was beginning to feel like a war zone. Their teenage son, Derik, used to love to attend church with them, but now he had strayed from the Christianity with which he had grown up, had fallen in with bad companions, and seemed to lack the strength of character to resist their influence. Or perhaps he was the bad influence. John and Darlene, seeing him nearing the precipice of ruin, tried to reason with him, tried to draw him back. But Derik only moved deeper into a world of drugs and rebellion. The disrespect of angry voices and slamming doors became commonplace for their home, as they tried to reach him and intervene in a way that would save him from certain ruin.

One day they attended a church seminar, which taught the creative language of heaven. Armed with these new (to them) principles, they claimed Psalm 1 for their son. “We thank You, oh Lord, and give You praise that Derik walks not in the counsel of the ungodly nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in Your law, and in Your law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season; whose leaf withers not, and whatever he does prospers.”

They entered into an agreement not to intervene with Derik any more. When thoughts of Derik's waywardness troubled their minds, they lifted their hearts and, where possible, their voices in praise and thanksgiving to God that, Amen, God's word is true in the life of their precious son, Derik.

One evening as they sat on the patio swing, a car slowed on the street outside their home and stopped momentarily. They saw Derik roll out as the car picked up momentum and sped away. He picked himself off the ground and staggered into the house. They looked at each other and, almost in unison, began to pray softly, "We thank You, Oh Lord, and give You praise that Derik walks not in the counsel of the ungodly nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful..." Their troubled hearts brought the situation to mind often throughout the day, and each time they praised God for hearing and answering their prayers for their son.

How long they prayed this way, I do not know, but if you asked them, they would probably say it did not seem long at all. One day their son came to them and quietly said he wanted to come back to them, to God, and to the church of his youth.

Miracles happen when Christians speak the language of heaven, but the first miracle is that we begin coming into a wonderful fellowship with God not possible through any other means.

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

“Not a word failed of any good thing
which the Lord had spoken to the
house of Israel. All came to pass”
(Joshua 21:45).

Olivia opened her eyes to a very special August morning. She jumped out of bed and reached for her robe. She had just so much time for worship, to dress, and to make it to the airport. Today she would fly hundreds of miles to attend her son's wedding. Entering the kitchen, she stopped in horror.

A lake of defrosted fruit with its accompanying juice covered the floor. In the night her refrigerator had obviously died and bequeathed her this mess on one of the most important days of her life. “Oh, no,” she groaned. “What do I do now?” How could she replace that refrigerator and make it to the airport on time?

Then another thought struck her. She too had been studying the principles of heavenly speaking. This might just be a good opportunity to put those principles into practice. At least perhaps it would lift her spirits for a few moments.

As she knelt to begin her usual morning devotions, she began to pray. She claimed that wonderful catch-all Bible promise in Romans 8:28: “All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

“Dear Lord,” she prayed, “I come to You this morning in the name of Jesus my Savior. I thank You and praise You for Your goodness and daily

blessings in my life. This morning You know that I have awakened to find my kitchen floor afloat in defrosted fruit. It's not the sort of thing I usually praise You for. But You have promised that all things work together for my good, because I love You and am called according to Your purpose for my life. I don't understand why this has happened on this particular morning, but You know. And because You have promised that it's for my benefit, I receive it as such and praise You with all my heart for it. I know You have my good in mind... ”

Suddenly a picture flashed into Olivia's mind and was gone. It was a picture of an electrical outlet with nothing plugged into it. In that instant she remembered she had fled the house the previous evening in her usual haste and, in a fire-prevention move advocated in a news article read that day, had thoughtlessly jerked all the appliance plugs out of an outlet above the kitchen deck. It was not a memory returning to her, as she had not even considered what she was unplugging, assuming it to be the toaster and blender.

Completing her morning worship, Olivia walked again into the kitchen and looked at the outlet. Confirming that a memory had not returned to her mind, the real outlet was pale yellow with tiny flowers on it, whereas the one she saw in prayer was a solid, plain brown.

Creative Speaking

The subject of creative speaking permeates Scripture. The topic appears in such abundance that this small work can present only a sample of references on the topic. Perhaps it is best to begin in the words of the Savior:

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”¹³⁵ We speak out of our experience; therefore, our words reveal who we are—the spirit or attitude that is in us. He continues, “For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned.”¹³⁶ Because they reflect who we are, words provide a basis by which to judge our eligibility for heaven. A sober thought indeed.

But Scripture says our words not only *reflect* who we are, they also have power to *shape* who we are.

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”¹³⁷ The words we speak convey our beliefs. Expressing confidence in the truthfulness of God's word reacts upon our minds and deepens that expressed confidence.

We have talked about the heart, which is to the mind what an operating system is to a computer. This is the basic unit of mind, the component that

reaches back to the very depths of who we are, the nonconscious—full of our beliefs about ourselves and the nature of the universe in which we live, our worldview. How do beliefs penetrate to that level of mind? Is it not through words we hear, words we read, and words we speak? Words we believe? Could this be why God directed Israel anciently, “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up.”¹³⁸ When parents teach the word of God to children, they usually do so out of belief that it is true; therefore, it is not just the words but also the belief in the words that children receive.

Thus the mind from surface to its deepest level begins to think, to understand, to make comparisons, to reason out of the truths imparted to it. This is God’s desire for us. “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.”¹³⁹ How many have scuttled their lives because they imbibed error in the inward parts, leading to the ways of sin and folly. “The words of a wise man’s mouth are gracious, but the lips of a fool shall swallow him up.”¹⁴⁰

Could it have been His knowledge of these principles that led Jesus to say, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”¹⁴¹ He clearly meant His hearers to understand His flesh to be *the words He spoke to them*.¹⁴² Received and believed at the deepest level of our minds, His words call humans out of the world to follow Him.

“The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body.”¹⁴³ Generally, in Scripture, repetition means the thought is important; we should pay especially close attention. Proverbs exactly repeats these words of 18:8 in 26:22. What could be so important about this thought? Let us analyze it.

As tasty trifles go into the inmost body (digestive system?), so words go into the inmost, what? Mind, perhaps? By “eating” the Bread from heaven, did Jesus want His words to settle into our “inmost mind,” saturating to the nonconscious and from there direct the human life heavenward? Receiving His words into the surface mind would not do the job; many have done this with no eternal benefit. The words—their concepts, truths and understandings—can provide the needed direction only from the deepest level of the spiritual and intellectual being, the level of *believing*. Is it not from this level—the abundance of the heart—that the mouth speaks? Is it not our beliefs at *this* level that define us, that make us who we are?

The Power of the Word

God speaks to us today through His word. Any words professing to come from God that do not agree with His written word are more than suspect. God can speak to us today in our minds, in visions, in dreams, but any communications represented as coming from God *must* align with His written word.¹⁴⁴ Genesis 1 shows clearly that God *spoke* our world into existence. He spoke life upon it—the life of plant, animal, fish, bird, and human. “He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” “[Christ] ... [upholds] all things by the word of His power [His powerful word].”¹⁴⁵

That same power is in His written word to us today. His word has power to create itself in our lives, *if we will agree with it by praising Him that it is so.* His written word, the Bible, contains the same power that transformed into the planet on which we live, and His word continues to sustain it. But it *cannot* create sitting on a shelf or lying on a coffee table. *It can only create if we believe it and speak words expressing agreement with it.*

“Behold, You desire *truth* in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.”¹⁴⁶ And what is truth? Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them by Your truth. *Your word is truth.*”¹⁴⁷ God’s word conveys ultimate truth, regardless of the enemy’s efforts to discredit and slander it. He looks for humans to receive it, believe it, and praise Him that *it is so.*

God is listening for us to *agree with Him* in our speaking. “I listened and heard, but they do not speak aright,” He says through Jeremiah.¹⁴⁸ So intent is our heavenly Father upon educating us in this matter He even gives us the words He wants us to say. “Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to Him, ‘Take away all iniquity, receive us graciously, for we will offer the sacrifices of our lips’”¹⁴⁹ What are the sacrifices of our lips? Psalms and Hebrews explain:

“Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of *thanksgiving*, and declare His works with *rejoicing*.” “I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.” “Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me Your judgments.” “Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.” “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”¹⁵⁰ Could genuine praise and thanksgiving be considered the “sacrifices” of the new covenant? “Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning

shall flee away.”¹⁵¹ When the saints go marching in, will they do so singing in joy and gladness? Scripture seems to say so.

The apostle Peter calls God’s people “a holy priesthood,” because they offer up these “spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” The priesthood of believers consists of those who have learned to abide in Christ through expressions of appreciation for His goodness. Peter also describes such believers as “living stones,” because they have Christ, the source of their life, abiding in them through the Holy Spirit.

Thus both Old and New Testaments cry out God’s desire that we express our thanks to Him for His abundant mercies toward us. Is that too much to ask for all He continually does for us? He calls it a *sacrifice*. But is it, really—to open our mouths in appreciation to Him? How can we do less?

The words He gives us in Scripture He desires us to receive and to repeat back to Him fragrant with agreement, with praise and thanksgiving that, Amen, *it is so*. Our circumstances are irrelevant in this model. This is the new way God would have us learn to speak. Only thus can we end the insubordination that has delayed our entrance into the eternal Promised Land. For, while we naturally speak out of circumstances, it is also true that words *shape* our thinking and thus our circumstances. Expressing agreement with God—faith¹⁵²—widens His way into our lives individually and corporately, allowing Him to express the fullness of His great love toward us in blessings of protection, provision, and at last, eternal life.

The Call of the Prophets

Notice that *speaking* played a role in the call of two of Scripture’s major prophets. Isaiah describes his call to the prophetic office in these words: “Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar; and he *touched my mouth* with it and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.’”¹⁵³ Notice, in the case of Isaiah’s prophetic call the spiritual cauterizing of his speaking apparatus *purged his sin*. Can it do the same for us? “Your lips have spoken lies; your tongue has muttered perversity. . . . In transgressions and lying against the Lord, and departing from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. . . . ‘As for Me,’ says the Lord, ‘this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants’ descendants, says the Lord, ‘from this time and forevermore.’”¹⁵⁴ Sinning through speaking comprised a huge measure of what constituted the sin of ancient Israel. But God put both His words and His Spirit into the prophet

Isaiah, equipping him to address the spiritual needs of God's children in that ancient time.

The call of the prophet Jeremiah reveals a similar scenario: "The Lord said to me; 'Do not say, "I am a youth," for you shall go to all to whom I send you. And whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you,' Says the Lord. Then *the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth*, and the Lord said to me, 'Behold, *I have put My words in your mouth*.'" ¹⁵⁵ One cannot escape the impression that speaking the creative word of God constitutes a far greater theme in God's plan than we have understood. In these last days perhaps God is putting His words in *our* mouths.

What Jesus Said About Speaking

How wisely spoke the ancients, "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips" "Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God... [L]et your words be few." "Words of the wise, spoken quietly, should be heard rather than the shout of a ruler of fools." ¹⁵⁶

The importance of understanding and implementing the principles of creative, godly speaking permeates the teachings of Jesus, who, among other things, said, "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man... For those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man." "A tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." ¹⁵⁷

How could Jesus emphasize the need for heavenly speaking more strongly than He did here? Notice what comes out of the heart—the life's operating system, the nonconscious. For it is at the level of the heart, the nonconscious, the deepest level of the mind that our true self exists. Here our speaking and doing originate. Therefore, our words, an element of our behavior, provide a measure of what constitutes the true self and thence can serve as a basis of judgment.

However true it may be that by changing the heart we can change the speaking, it is also true Biblically that by changing the speaking we can thereby change the heart.

The Apostle Paul

One of the greatest of the apostles, Paul, was spiritually born out of season. Yet he understood these principles and clearly implemented them in his own life. Among the greatest of the New Testament apostles, he quotes the words of Moses, perhaps the greatest of the *Old Testament* prophets: "The righteousness of faith speaks in this way, 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).' But what does it say? *'The word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart* (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you *confess with your mouth* the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation."¹⁵⁸

Why would Paul quote this, unless he deemed it exceedingly important? Both Paul and Moses appear to have understood the power of creative, heavenly speaking in the exercise of faith. In 2 Corinthians 11:22-28 Paul tells of some of his trials and tribulations on behalf of the fledgling church; he speaks of being whipped, stoned, shipwrecked, hungry, weary, in multiplied perils. But through it all he could exclaim, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"¹⁵⁹

Even when imprisoned in stocks, he rejoiced in the Lord. "At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."¹⁶⁰ In that dark, damp, smelly prison Paul and Silas could easily have wondered where God was, while they suffered such immense discomfort and indignity. But no; they prayed, sang hymns, and rejoiced in their God. Suddenly an earthquake shook open the prison doors. Paul, it seems, understood how appealing the angels of heaven find our praise, rejoicing, and thanksgiving, even in the most trying of times. *They love to hear us expressing agreement with God and our appreciation of and to Him.* And as a reward for their steadfast faith, demonstrated through their praise, God gave Paul and Silas the souls of the jailer, his family, and perhaps some of the other prisoners as well, into eternity. Then, as now, a spirit of appreciation served as a veritable conduit to funnel the presence and blessings of God into that challenging moment of their lives.

And it is Paul who left us one of the clearest admonitions to stay in the positive, upbeat, creative, and eternal language of heaven. "Finally, brethren,

whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”¹⁶¹ Paul understood the creative nature of human speaking, that what we focus on in thought and word grows. If we want our lives overrun with torment and tragedy, we should keep verbalizing our negative circumstances. The devil loves to hear it. If we have a problem area, he’ll happily use it as a garbage dump for whatever else he can find to add to our present woes. But if we would have the good that God has in mind for us, we must learn to focus our thoughts and words on the blessings God has already given us and those “on their way” in His promises. Such speaking attracts the Holy Spirit and holy angels with their arms laden with good things for our lives.

True, there may still be experiences we would prefer to avoid, just as there were in the lives of Jesus and Paul, Job and the martyrs through the ages. But, as in their lives the troubles were steppingstones to God’s good purposes, any trials that come to us while we live by faith and speak the creative heavenly language will be steppingstones to the same everlasting joy awaiting us in the heavens. Therefore, even in trials we, with the apostle Paul, can rejoice.

Job’s Experience

The experience of Job illustrates many of the principles of the language of heaven. From the most prosperous man in the East his fortunes reversed to ill health, to pain, to the death of his children, to the loss of the basis of his wealth—his livestock; to his wife’s voicing Satan’s thoughts, urging Job to “curse God and die,” to the aggravation of friends insisting it all came about because he had sinned. What a package of misfortune! Early in his trial he exclaimed, “The thing I greatly feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me.”¹⁶² Remember how fearful he was regarding his children?¹⁶³ Job had apparently spent considerable time thinking of, worrying about, and most likely speaking of his fears. Did the enemy have any trouble figuring out where and how to strike him, when God released his hedge? Were his speech and thinking creative at this point?

Yet early in his trial he showed an embryonic understanding of the importance of speaking faith.

“While [his servant] was still speaking, another also came and said, ‘Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!’

"Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said:

'Naked I came from my mother's womb,

'And naked shall I return there.

'The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;

'Blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

Like many of us, Job seems to have tried to order his life according to his narrow understanding of God. Also like many of us, Job needed a deeper experience—one that would make God real in his experience and would give him a new understanding of heaven's purposes in the events of his daily life.

Soon visitors came to "comfort" him. As he dialogued with them, we see his faith rising, in spite of his great adversity. In a beautiful moment of praise and surrender, Job proclaims, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."¹⁶⁴ Paul later presents this attitude as an element of Christian thought. "In *everything* give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."¹⁶⁵ Job did this, revealing his respect for and loyalty to God regardless of circumstances.

Paul's directions agree with those of Jesus, when He told Christians, as they experienced persecution, to "rejoice in that day and leap for joy!" This type of response violates our human nature—our inclination to worry and complain—in times of stress. Job reached above his torment to express confidence that, no matter what the circumstances or outcome, God was worthy of trust and Job would trust Him.

Did the principles of faith work in the life of Job? "And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he lost. Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the Lord (?) had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold.

"Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. . . . In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers."¹⁶⁶

His trust in God at the end of his trial was far deeper than at the beginning. Early on he complains, curses the day of his birth, and desires death rather

than this trial. He had no idea why his life had taken such a down turn, but he came through it with greater love and surrender to God than when it began. Besides the words already quoted He achieved the point where he could say, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know; that in my flesh I shall see God."¹⁶⁷ Job grew during his trial in areas where before he did not even see a need to grow.

And the God who spoke the universe—with all its life and beauty and mystery—into existence came through for Job when "he prayed for his friends."¹⁶⁸ We don't know that Job ever understood it was a test—but he passed it. And God rewarded him. It should encourage us as well, that the early Job, though already a righteous man, still had some growing to do. Could his enhanced appreciation of God, born out of terrible adversity, have heightened his sense of the Holy Spirit's presence, and helped to funnel those blessings, into his later life? Might it work the same for us?

When trials come to us, do we always think of them as tests ordered in heaven? I'm convinced that the outcome of the majority of our trials depends upon how we relate to them. Can we receive them as from our loving God, working out our good, under His watchful eye and omnipotent control? Can we see that the outcome is good, regardless? I've seen God bring good out of bad too many times to doubt this any more.

Zacharias vs. Mary

As Zacharias ministered beside the altar in the temple, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and informed him that he and his wife, Elizabeth, would have a son. Zacharias said, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."¹⁶⁹ He expressed doubt that God's word—which Gabriel spoke—would come true. The angel struck him *mute* until after the birth of his son, John the Baptist, because his words revealed his skeptical heart. See how important our speaking is to heaven? Zacharias' words clearly displeased God! When humans express doubt of God's word, are they not calling Him a liar?

Six months into Elizabeth's pregnancy, the angel visited her cousin Mary in Nazareth of Galilee with the news that Mary, too, would have a son. Mary asked how this could be, since she was a virgin. Upon the angel's assurance that thus it would be, Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." God addressed Mary through the angel. The angel's words were actually God's word to her, which Mary believed and continued rejoicing that it would be as He described.¹⁷⁰ *Because she believed and her words expressed confidence in God, His purposes could go forward.*

Notice the difference between Zacharias' question and Mary's question to the angel. Hers did not imply doubt; rather, it gathered information she needed in order to cooperate with heaven in the great mission assigned her. *His* expressed skepticism that God's word through the angel could come true. And it was Zacharias whom the angel reproved.

Jonathan and His Armor Bearer

During some of the darkest days of the Israeli-Philistine wars, King Saul's son, Jonathan, and his armor bearer utilized the creative language of heaven to address Israel's great perceived need of a decisive military victory against the Philistines.

From their first entrance into the land forty years after leaving Egypt, Israel knew that God intended the expulsion of heathen nations from the Promised Land. Many years before, the word of the Lord had come to Joshua on the very eve of their remarkable journey through the Jordan and onto the soil of their new homeland.

"Arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them."

Significantly, God had further said to Joshua: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."¹⁷¹ God clearly intended Joshua and all of Israel to live by the promises of His word.

Surely it was in these words and others like them that Jonathan trusted in saying to his armor bearer, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised [Philistines]; it may be that the Lord will work for us. For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few."¹⁷² His words agreed with God's promises. He believed and confessed his belief that God would fulfill His word to them through Joshua and others. Circumstances were irrelevant to him, positioned as they were against God's word.

Our heavenly Father appears to see His promises as commitments He has made to us, though commitments that He can only fulfill when we believe

and receive them, act in accordance with them, and confess that, Amen, *it is so*.

Read the outcome of Jonathan and his armor bearer's exploit in 1 Samuel 14, as the Philistine warriors became confused and began warring against each other.

Who To Trust

Someone has told the story of two children who argued over who knows what. "It is so," said one.

"It's not so," cried the other.

"It is so," said the first.

"It's not so," came the retort.

The first came back with the final argument. "It is so," he said, "because my mother says it's so. And if my mother says it's so, it's so, even if it's not so." In the same way, if God's word says it's so, it matters not our circumstances. He gives us the choice whether to continue living by sight and circumstance or to live in the reality of His creative word.

God looks to us for that level of confidence in His word—spoken and acted upon. Only then can the word begin to create in our lives the good things God has planned for us. Only then can we enter into that union with Him that we must have, if we would enter the eternal home He is preparing for those who trust Him.

The Exodus

But perhaps the supreme Biblical illustration contrasting living by sight with living by faith in God's creative word occurred during Israel's journey toward the Promised Land.

God expected little from Israel at the outset. He gave them no duties, with the possible exception of reinstating Sabbath observance, until the time of the final plague. With a negative quality of life they had little to lose by anointing their doorposts with lamb's blood and cooking the Passover meal. No doubt it gave them hope that their lives of involuntary servitude would soon improve. Like a loving Father, God took care of everything. He merely asked an occasional token expression of their confidence in Him. They saw miracles on the heels of miracles. The final one found them sandwiched between two methods of certain death; death by the swords of the Egyptian army or death by drowning in the Red Sea. Again, with nothing to lose, Israel, at God's command, stepped down into the water—and the Sea divided and became a dry road to the other side. Once safely on the far side

with the Egyptian army defeated, they stopped for a season of praise and thanksgiving. How they sang; how they danced; how they rejoiced!

But soon they again set out toward their new home and after three days came to Marah, the place of bitter waters. What occurred there speaks directly to our topic.

The people were thirsty after three days' walking in the desert, and God had brought them to a place where the water was not potable. Here, at the first sign of trouble, the people raised their voices to complain of their hardships, to condemn God for divine malpractice, to moan that the desert was to be their grave. What they did not understand was that *this was a test*. (See Exodus 15:25.) With their memories of the miracles of protection and guidance that God had so recently given them still alive in their minds, they chose to murmur about their present circumstances. Yes, it was human. Yes, it was an aspect of their nature. But it was not what God was looking for nor was it what they needed to do to create a climate for further heavenly benefits. They murmured; that is, they spoke by sight and circumstance rather than by the creative promises of God. They could not build up the union God desired to have with them, the union they needed, unless they learned to speak confidence in God's word, to praise Him no matter what. They failed to understand that praising Him denotes resting, believing, waiting to see the magnificence of the outcome He has in mind.

Reader, *it was a test*. How many tests have *we* failed because we have fought circumstances, not understanding the creative nature of speaking and God's beneficent plans for us, if we will only believe His word and confess that belief in the form of praise and rejoicing in His presence? Yes, they were thirsty. They had a real problem; a life threatening problem. But God had a right to expect them to trust Him at this point, even in the face of death. How many non-life-threatening problems have *we* encountered with the same lack of faith they showed?

Speak To the Rock

Another story from this era underscores both God's earnest desire to teach Israel and their persistent inability to learn.

Recurringly, throughout their wilderness wanderings, thirst was an issue. At Rephidim as at Marah they had no water: "[T]he people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, 'Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?'"¹⁷³ In response, "The Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it that the people may drink.'"¹⁷⁴

We have not yet realized the depth of meaning in these words, nor the beautiful object lesson Christ meant to convey through it. Revelation 5:6 and 13:8 say the Lamb of God, Christ the Lord, was slain or “struck” “from the foundation of the world.” At the very moment sin entered, in heaven’s eyes, He received the blow. All provisions come to us as gifts of His great sacrifice. This was the price of our lives, our comfort, and our hope.

Time passed and again they had no water. “Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. *Speak to the rock* before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.’”¹⁷⁵

Henceforth, humanity need only *speak* to the Rock.

But what did Moses do? “Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he [Moses] said to them, ‘Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?’ Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.”

Moses did not ask the Rock for water, as God directed. Rather, he struck it a second time. For his insubordination God denied Moses his heart’s desire—entrance into the Promised Land with Israel. He would die and turn over leadership to Joshua; from Pisgah’s lofty height he would see the land afar, and there he would sleep in death.

How important God considered this object lesson to Israel! We sometimes think Moses’ failure in striking the rock twice in violation of his instructions to *speak* to the rock did not deserve the severity of its punishment. His whole life had been about delivering Israel from Egypt into Canaan. Now, because he ruined the lesson God here desired to teach, he could not accompany God’s people into Canaan land. Israel *must* understand the seriousness of Moses’ act. He had spoiled the metaphor God intended to use to instruct Israel. The Rock was cleft once for all, and for all time. Now and ever, Israel must know they need only *speak* to the Rock.¹⁷⁶

Communion with God. How blessed it is! That humanity can have fellowship with the living God is an honor above all honors, bought for us on Calvary. Israel could not derive this critically important lesson when Moses struck the rock the second time. How important is the language of heaven to God and to us in our need for union with Him!

Caleb and Joshua

This era of Bible history offers example upon example of these principles—far too many to incorporate into this small work. I leave you the joy of discovering them for yourself. However, one story in particular demands comment.

As the time had arrived to enter their new homeland, Israel felt the need to send spies—one per tribe—ahead of them to scout out the land and describe what they found. The spies returned with a sobering report. “The people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan”

These words did not inspire confidence in God’s ability to take them into the Promised Land. “Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.”

But two of the spies had a different view of the matter. Caleb reported, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.”

In grief Joshua tore his clothing and supported Caleb in these words, “The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, ‘a land which flows with milk and honey.’ Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread: their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them.”

Whereupon the people picked up stones to cast at Caleb and Joshua until God intervened to stop them. Read the story in Numbers 13 and 14.

If we had any doubts about the creative nature of God’s word and our wisdom in expressing confidence in it, especially in times of crisis, this story should settle them.

Forty years later the adults who expressed belief that they could not go into the Promised Land were dead. But Caleb and Joshua, who expressed confidence in God’s word to them, lived on to see God’s word fulfilled in their own lives, as they, with a new generation of Israel, entered into their new home.

Attitude

Malachi 3 contains a clear and helpful statement on the subject of creative, heavenly speaking. We often quote the last part of it, but without the contrast of the earlier section we lose much of the impact. Have we ever heard such speakers as described here?

"Your words have been harsh against Me," says the Lord. Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?' You have said, 'It is vain to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the Lord of hosts? So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; yes, those who tempt God go free.'" Can you hear the whining, the charges being leveled against God? Have we heard such speakers? Have we ourselves spoken in this way?

But notice the contrast:

"Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name. 'They shall be Mine,' says the Lord of hosts, 'On the day that I make them My jewels.'"¹⁷⁷

This passage contrasts two attitudes of so-called Christians. The first feels at liberty to speak out of their perceived negative circumstances instead of expressing confidence in God. But the other respects and meditates on God, believes and praises Him for His promises, says "Amen," to them—"it is so."

We cannot have a relationship with a human by constantly telling him or her what they're doing wrong. There must be appreciation—not merely felt but expressed. God is like us in this way. We cannot have *union* with Him without *verbalizing confidence* in Him—no matter what our circumstances may be. He even records our thanksgiving and appreciation in a special book He prepared for this purpose, a Book of Remembrance. Those whose words qualify for inclusion in this book "shall be mine when I make up my jewels." Does it behoove us to get as many words of gratitude and thanksgiving to God as possible into His special book?

This lesson God's remnant will have learned, for "in their mouth was found no guile"¹⁷⁸ meaning no distortions of truth. Since God's word is truth, this may mean that these individuals have learned to speak truth as it appears in God's word—not necessarily as it appears in their daily experience. The apostle Peter quotes and thus emphasizes Psalm 34:12-16: "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile."¹⁷⁹ "Guile" not only means telling lies, it also implies speaking contrary to God's word, which is truth; in essence, calling *Him* a liar.

Of God's remnant it is further prophesied that, "They overcame him [the dragon] by the blood of the Lamb and *by the word of their testimony*."¹⁸⁰ The blood of the Lamb, so powerful to save and available to "whosoever will," still cannot ransom anyone who persistently speaks contrary to, or doubts, God's word.

The "Praise and Thanksgiving" Choirs

Scripture offers a prominent theme we have, nonetheless, for the most part overlooked or ignored. It seems that where God's children particularly desired to express appreciation to Him, they appointed praise-and-thanksgiving choirs to convey it. These Biblical choir stories teach great lessons.

The first event Scripture records of this phenomenon occurred at the creation of our world. God refers to it in His comments to Job:

"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Tell Me, if you have understanding.

Who determined its measurements?

Surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

To what were its foundations fastened?

Or who laid its cornerstone,

When the morning stars sang together,

And all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Job 38:4-7.

One can easily imagine the appreciation these unfallen beings felt toward Him who sits on the throne of the universe. Here was a beautiful world newly come from His hand of love. Expressing their appreciation in praise must have felt natural indeed. What greater joy could exist in the universe than realizing the greatness of God's love as expressed in His power to create a new, beautiful world?

In the unfallen realm praise-and-thanksgiving choirs appear as the norm.

The first record of a choir of praise and thanksgiving on earth occurs in connection with the exodus of Israel from Egypt. After the miracles that released them from bondage, after their walk through the Red Sea on dry ground and that whole phenomenal deliverance, the entire camp of Israel turned into one mighty choir. "Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and spoke, saying:

'I will sing to the Lord,

For He has triumphed gloriously!

The horse and its rider

He has thrown into the sea!

The Lord is my strength and song.

And He has become my salvation:

He is my God, and I will praise Him;

My father's God, and I will exalt Him.

The Lord is a man of war;

The Lord is His name.

Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea;

His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.

The depths have covered them;

They sank to the bottom like a stone.”

Read the entire song in Exodus 15. Again, God's mercy brought them undeserved good, and they could not forebear to express their joy and appreciation in songs of praise. One commentator suggests that “if the ancient Israelites had gone on singing and had not once stopped to murmur, they would speedily have reached Zion, the city whose builder and maker is God.”¹⁸¹

The song of Moses is a song of praise, a song of deliverance, which the redeemed will know and sing one day around God's throne.¹⁸²

Singers of praise figured prominently throughout the entire worship history of the children of Israel. David wrote and sang psalms. Asaph and his sons wrote and performed hymns of praise in connection with the services of Solomon's temple. They even appeared to have a class of singers who “taught [the people] to sing praise.”¹⁸³ Wherever God's people worshipped Him anciently, there were the great choirs, the great hymns of praise.

Just as those migrating from *Egyptian* bondage sang praises to God, those returning from *Babylonian* bondage did the same. In re-establishing the worship of the Creator, the exiles returning to Jerusalem instituted great, highly respected choirs, members of which received payment from the temple treasury.¹⁸⁴ Without question, in the worship services of ancient Israel—our example in spiritual things—hymns of praise and the choirs who sang them were held in the highest regard. We need to look more closely not only at what they contributed to the spiritual climate of Israel anciently but also at their meaning to us today.

Jehoshaphat

The Biblical tale of Judah's good king Jehoshaphat provides another "language of heaven" choir story with very special meaning to all who desire to live by faith.

Jehoshaphat received word that three war-like kings were coming against Judah and would be upon them soon. Rather than rely on the extensive city fortifications installed during his reign, he proclaimed a fast and called the people together to Jerusalem for a great prayer meeting. In sight of all the people, he addressed the living God, praising Him first, for His great mercies to them. With the people's minds now thoroughly focused on God, Jehoshaphat briefly mentioned the present emergency, reminding the Lord of certain promises He had made to them regarding emergencies such as the one they now faced.

The king then made a vital admission to the Lord. "We have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." Jehoshaphat's confession of helplessness, his assertion that all their eyes were upon the Lord to see how He would fulfill His promise irresistibly attracted God into the situation. He spoke to the people on the spot through the prophet Jahaziel.

"Listen, all of you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you King Jehoshaphat!" he said. "Thus says the Lord to you. 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you. O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed: tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you."

How would the people respond in the face of the overwhelmingly superior forces coming against them? Would they respond by circumstance or would they believe God's word?

"They rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.'"

Now, notice how they expressed confidence in the word of God to them:

"And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went

out before the army and were saying: 'Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever.'

"Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah: and they were defeated. For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another."¹⁸⁵

How did heavenly language play a part in the victory? Can we apply the principles of this victory to needs in our own lives today?

The Apostle James

The apostle James apparently saw a world of meaning in the subject of speaking. He comments upon it extensively. "If anyone does not stumble in words, he is a perfect man able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue [speaking] is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

"For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so."¹⁸⁶

But God, knowing our frame, offers us the opportunity to speak His creative word, to apply its healing power to our needs.

"By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."¹⁸⁷

The communion established through receiving and believing those promises and praying them back to our God in the form of praise and thanksgiving forges an eternal bond with our Lord and Savior. As we believe His word and put forth efforts in this direction it widens God's way into our lives. It brings Him in as a precious Friend who shares His righteousness with us. Thus in eternity we may count our needs as among our greatest blessings.

The Song of Moses and the Lamb

Revelation, Scripture's last book, describes God's human champions in earth's final days. They have learned to praise the Lord, for they stand on the glassy sea before God's throne and sing "the song of Moses and the Lamb."¹⁸⁸ Revelation 14:3 adds to their description. Here they sing as well, but this time they sing a "new song." God's name [character¹⁸⁹] appears in their foreheads, an apt symbol of the frontal lobe—seat of understanding.¹⁹⁰ They know God by character, and that knowledge has shaped their own characters and thus their eternal destinies.

Scripture actually contains two "songs of Moses," one in Deuteronomy 32 and another in Exodus 15. Each recites Israel's experience in migrating from Egypt to Canaan. Each magnifies, extols, and glorifies the God who brought them through every adverse circumstance. These are beautiful praise songs, lifting up the eternal One in spirit, heart, and voice.

But what is *Revelation's* song of Moses? What is the "new song" His remnant sing, as they stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion? It too, is a song of praise, for "He hath put a *new song* in my mouth, even praise unto our God."¹⁹¹ The symbols show that God's champions of earth's final hours will know God by His character and will have learned to praise Him in the big and small events of every day. They will know that all things in their lives are in His hands, that He is love, that all things work together for good to them because they are His children. Thus through praise and appreciation they have learned to walk with God as did Abraham, Noah, Job; the great patriarchs, prophets and apostles of old.

How is praise the song of the Lamb? Of all that makes life good and worthwhile, nothing compares with the gift of the Lamb. It was the slain Lamb who made life possible. His cross, planted at "the foundation of the world,"¹⁹² purchased every comfort of life for all humankind. At gratitude's core God's children understand it was that amazing Gift that brought all other good into their lives. The "new song" glorifies the Lamb; it is directed toward Him. It pronounces Him worthy, magnificent victor in the great war of the universe. The "new song" of praise, as sung by the redeemed, magnifies Jesus, the slain Lamb of God.

THE WISDOM OF LISTENING

"I did not listen to the voice of my teachers
or incline my ear to my instructors.
Now I am at the point of utter ruin"
(Proverbs 5:13, 14).

“O ne more step and you’ll fall in.”

The words popped into her mind, and she took another step, sliding off the slimy rock into the river. Fortunately she was a strong swimmer and, with some struggle occasioned by the unexpectedness of the dip, regained shore, hair and clothes dripping and plans changed for the remainder of the day. If only she’d listened to that quiet voice of wisdom.

She had heard it before, and she has heard it since. Learning to listen to it has become a priority to her.

Learning To Listen

No discussion of heavenly speaking can leave out the importance of learning to listen well, for Scripture is full of it. “Do you see a man hasty in his words [eager to speak]? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”¹⁹³

“Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few... a fool’s voice is known by his many words.”¹⁹⁴ So much of our knowledge base depends upon our ability to *listen* and to absorb information from the world around us. Our listening skills influence the quality of our human interpersonal relationships as well as

our union with God. Sadly, society fails to emphasize the art of listening well. "Everybody wants to talk; nobody wants to listen," said a wise friend of mine, who had apparently learned to esteem that in which humans generally perceive little value.

Imagine if you will, a setting where two people converse. The speaker doggedly informs the other of his or her ailments, problems, concerns, and opinions. The listener in the duo asks questions, shows interest, and offers a comment now and then. In this situation one person is the understood superior; the other, weak and needy. Which is which? Those who consistently require others to listen to them admit thereby the superiority of the listener. The unspoken message says the speaker attributes to the listener the intelligence to solve his problems—something the speaker cannot do for himself. Or the message is that the speaker wishes to impress the listener with his store of knowledge—again placing the listener above the speaker in the pecking-order. How many desire to impress a perceived inferior?

Unburdening oneself is not always a bad thing; we all need someone to listen to us from time to time. But wouldn't you rather tend to be a listener than tend to need one? Here as in so many situations in life we choose our place. Good listeners are made, not born.

Have you noticed, or am I wrong, that some speakers seem to think their mouth always has right-of-way. They dominate conversations, over-talk and interrupt at will. Are not such communications *faux pas* out of place in a Christian setting but, sadly, they occur there all too often. As strong as may be the temptation, asking for a little more ear, a little less mouth, hardly seems the Christian thing to do. In fact, developing a Christ-like strategy for dealing with such undisciplined speakers represents a real challenge in the Christian realm. But here is an inoffensive exercise that may help to reveal, in a group setting, such individuals to themselves.

Have one person act as "secretary" for the group. That person will write the names of all participants on a sheet of paper. As each speaks, the secretary places a hash mark beside their name. If possible, the duration of each person's contributions to the group could be noted as well. At the end of the session, have the secretary present the results. It should reveal if one person is dominating the discussions and, if so, which one. Sadly, the dominating "voice" often does not realize he or she is doing it. And while one hopes the group would not ostracize such persons, nevertheless, the group's opinion of them cannot but suffer from it. Listeners tend to be considered more intelligent; excessive talkers too often diminish the opinion others have of them. Scripture abounds in references to both listening and speaking.¹⁹⁵

From beginning to end it places great emphasis on wise use of the human voice. It was when Eve not only stopped to *listen* to the serpent but *spoke* with him as well that sorrow descended upon the human race. Jesus, when in Herod's presence, refused to speak,¹⁹⁶ even though the wily ruler warned Him he had power to release Him or to take His life if He refused to dialogue. "As a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He [Jesus] opened not His mouth."¹⁹⁷ Herod had heard the gospel from the lips of John the Baptist and rhanked Messiah's herald by taking his life. Jesus could say nothing to change that reality, nor could He add to Herod's store of knowledge regarding the gospel. Therefore, in wisdom He refused to multiply words on a hopeless situation. He remained silent.

Modern Sound Therapy

As a pleasant side benefit, true Christianity enjoys the support of a number of new insights streaming from today's "cutting edge" science. These new insights confirm Scriptural models—models that we may have, in the past, had to take by faith. This holds true in countless areas of inquiry, including the study of sound and speaking. These respected modern scientists may or may not be aware of the harmony between Scripture and much of their new science; nonetheless, a good case can be made from both science and Scripture that language and sound affect our bodies and our lives in profound ways.

Dr. Joshua Leeds, himself a sound-therapy researcher, calls Dr. Alfred Tomatis, a French physician, the guru of modern sound therapy, the "Einstein of the ear." Tomatis believes, says Leeds, that the ear's primary function is to "charge the brain's neocortex with the electrical impulses of sound."¹⁹⁸ Hearing is the first sense to activate, and it does so when an embryo is about four and one half months in the womb. Sound impulses activate the fetus' brain "to govern the growth of the rest of the physical organism. After birth, sound is to the nervous system what food is to our physical bodies: Food provides nourishment at the cellular level of the organism, and sound feeds us the electrical impulses that charge the neocortex."¹⁹⁹

Does praising God have value *for us* above and beyond the joy it brings to God? Is not praise the sound heard in heaven? Is that perhaps the sound that reaches back to our most primitive beginnings and forward into eternity? Were we made to thrive in an atmosphere of praise and appreciation?

Leeds describes the body's vegus nerve as beginning on either side of the eardrum and passing through the body, touching every organ of the torso and abdomen, and continuing to the anus. Sound, in addition to exciting the brain, travels throughout the body via the vegus nerve, exciting or resonating the cells of every bodily organ.²⁰⁰ All living things resonare to sound. What

kind of sound are we putting into our body? Are we “resonating” health and happiness or sorrow to ourselves and to those around us?

Leeds says further, “The more I know about sound, the more I aggressively advocate intentional soundscapes.”²⁰¹ Sound therapy is being used successfully to treat many disorders, including but not limited to autism, other mental disabilities, stress and innumerable other health problems. “Music and sound,” says Leeds, “unravel disorganized neural wiring critical to unlocking human potential.”²⁰² It “engages the brain at almost every level.”²⁰³

Researchers now know that certain types of music styles and patterns have very specific effects in the body and can be focused for precise purposes. They know, for example, what sounds help alleviate pain. What sounds increase the time we are able to exercise. Which music is most beneficial in developing higher IQs in children. Which helps improve adult memory.²⁰⁴ Sound therapists can now tailor programs to address individual human needs.

Listening and sound can be powerful allies in building the happy, healthy lives we all desire, or it can be a powerful tool in the enemy’s hand to damage and destroy us. Praise our heavenly Father for giving us the ability to choose which we will have.

The Voice of God

The art of listening well is an integral part of the language of heaven. And while it encompasses human speech and sound, that is only the beginning. The importance of listening *to God* cannot be overemphasized.

God speaks to us in many ways—through nature, through receiving and giving human love, through lessons in the events of our daily lives. But God’s voice speaks to us clearest in His word. Second Peter 1:21 makes this bold claim for Scripture. “Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” Second Timothy 3:16 and 17 further asserts, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

If there is a God, and if He is omnipotent—powerful enough to speak worlds into being (both of which I believe)—it follows that He must have set in this world *something* to serve as a “court of last resort,” something humans can *count on*, can consult, in order to understand His mind. The Bible makes that claim for itself, and while much of society accuses Scripture of espousing falsehoods, that opinion came down a bit prematurely—before all (or even most) of the facts were in. Scripture is increasingly vindicating its inspired

origin to scientists and scholars in a wide range of disciplines today—as well as to everyday people.

If we cannot (or will not) hear God speaking to us in His word, then nothing in the present small work is worth much attention.

But to those willing to make Scripture their guide of first and last resort, God will speak in His characteristic “still small voice.” “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.” “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go: I will guide you with My eye.”²⁰⁵

The prophet Elijah heard God speak in this way. “Behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but *the Lord was not in the wind*; and after the wind an earthquake, but *the Lord was not in the earthquake*; and after the earthquake a fire, but *the Lord was not in the fire*; and after the fire *a still small voice*. So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And suddenly a voice came to him, and said, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’”²⁰⁶

Because God raised His voice at Sinai, because our parents (and we, in our carnal nature) raise our voices to get attention, we tend to expect God to raise His voice anytime He wants *our* attention. But when God “raises His voice,” in judgments, it is often too late for humans to benefit from it. We need to train ourselves now to listen to that “still, small voice of wisdom” that will keep us from the paths of disaster, sin, and folly.

Hearing God speak through His word is just the beginning. Sometimes we need counsel for specific needs and trials that often confront us in the everyday. Should we let our child go away to college, when he or she could go to school closer to home? Does God want me to take that job five hundred miles away? How can I best minister to the grave emotional and physical needs of an ailing loved one? After applying Biblical principles to such situations, sometimes we need a bit more. God can speak His will to us on these occasions, but in our noisy, hurry-up world it’s not always easy to hear Him. We all need quiet time, where the mind can more distinctly hear God’s voice. The early morning meets that need for many, and those of us who habitually meet with God at that hour highly recommend it. In fact, it becomes addictive, like breathing, to meet with our best Friend as the day begins. I cannot remember all the solutions to problems that have come to my mind, as I knelt before my Lord in that early-morning, secret place of prayer. When I forget to seek His counsel is when I get into trouble.

“Don’t do that; you’re going to cut yourself,” said the still, small voice to Kathy, as she tugged at pieces of a broken glass pot. Suddenly one of the

pieces slipped; blood gushed before she felt the sharp pain. Six stitches and a large medical bill later, she contemplated the voice that tried to warn her.

When we have placed ourselves into God's hands each day at dawn, a huge part of learning to walk with Him through the day is learning to listen for that voice. But when we emphasize talking, we can easily ignore the "still, small voice." We cannot as readily hear that heavenly voice over our own.

While working in homecare, I finalized my invalid patient's morning routine, put her in her "locomotive-sized," special-built wheelchair, and started out the bedroom door. "You didn't put on her elbow pads," said my little voice. "Oh," I argued, "I'll put them on in the living room."

Boom!

That quickly, I scraped a quarter-sized piece of skin off her elbow on the bedroom doorframe.

I'm learning not to argue with that voice. Not to go into denial. Not to delay. When "the voice" speaks, my goal is immediately to obey.

Of course, it's not a voice such as we hear in the human realm. It's actually a strong impression that registers in the thoughts, often a brief sentence. Some have even reported hearing actual words, which, although I have not had that experience, I do not discount it as a possibility. It may be that as we place more emphasis upon listening when that still voice speaks to our mind, that it will grow louder and we shall be able easily to distinguish it from the din of the world around us.

The ability to hear that voice, I am convinced, should be a top priority. It should be considered one of the fruits of the Spirit, for it is the Spirit's voice we hear.²⁰⁷ It was thus that the Savior, through the Holy Spirit, spoke with the apostles and with patriarchs of old. As we embrace God's plan to relate to us in this way and as we educate ourselves by theory and lab in the area of listening, our union with the Savior will strengthen and our fellowship with Him grow strong.

“ON A DARKLING PLAIN”

“Great is the mystery of godliness”
(Romans 3:16).

Jan met her soul mate while singing in a choir he conducted.²⁰⁸ They married and just eighteen months later Clive contracted herpes encephalitis, an exceedingly rare form of amnesia that in essence turned his brain into “mush.” From that day his memory endured but seven seconds. He remembered not who he was, nor her name, nor the rich and productive life he had lived. All was gone—except, he remembered that he loved her. A glimpse of her face brightened his, as nothing else in his small world could do. And he remembered music. On the piano he could still play, though perhaps a bit less proficiently, the great works of the great composers he had known, had loved, and his life had honored.

Is it possible that his memories of that which brought him the greatest joy resided somewhere other than his brain? New insights from emerging science suggest this possibility and give new support to Scripture’s description of a knowing heart.

Mysterious World

“We are here as on a darkling plain,” wrote Matthew Arnold. “Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, where ignorant armies clash by night.”²⁰⁹ Throughout time the world’s great thinkers have pointed out how little we really know. Arnold describes nations fielding armies in support of a cause certainly deemed righteous at its start but too often found wanting in light of

advancing knowledge. We want to operate, to address the world out of truth, but the deepest part of us asks, what is truth? If ever ultimate truth is known, it surely will reveal God as never before.

But now "[I]t is as though the true objective world lies forever half concealed beneath a translucent, plastic dome. Peering through its cloudy surface, deformed and distorted by the ever-changing perspectives of theory, man faintly espies certain apparently stable relationships and recurring events. A consistent isomorphic representation of these relationships and events is the maximal possibility of his knowledge. Beyond that point he stares into the void" [Lincoln Barnett, *The Universe and Doctor Einstein*, 2d ed. (Harper & Brothers, 1957), pp. 114-5]. For all that science learns of the universe, infinity lies beyond. Each gain is but a portal to greater mystery.

Jesus said objective truth lies only in Scripture.²¹⁰ God's word is and has always been enough for Christians, who need no endorsement from human intelligentsia to receive Scripture with confidence and respect. But in appealing to our intellect as well as to our emotions, it appears our heavenly Father may have called up reinforcements from the scientific world to bolster confidence in His word, perhaps not to benefit Christian thinkers as much as for the secular mind.

Science and God's Word

Emerging science appears to be thinking God's thoughts after Him in a variety of new ways and specialties. Amazingly, much of the new information coming from science today seems to support Christian thought in areas that, in the past, we have happily taken by faith alone, confident in our heavenly Father's word. Can sound, perhaps the sound of the human voice, create? Where lies the brain center of the unconscious mind? Does DNA shed light on any claims of Scripture? How can intelligent beings—demons, angels, and Holy Spirit—exist in a world beyond human senses and yet interact in our world? Can it be true that the Holy Spirit exists as a living, Divine Being—as a Helper in our day-to-day experience?

When God speaks, His word is true irrespective of what might be represented as evidence to the contrary. Clinging to this fact kept much of Christendom from buying into some of the flawed offerings of science—macroevolution, reincarnation, random design—clearly denied in Scripture, while awaiting the vindicating evidence to arrive. It now appears that at least some of the mysteries science explores today support Scripture in areas where once doubters scoffed. The possibility of the Holy Spirit, holy angels, and demons actually occupying space in our day-to-day environment is no longer so easily denied.

Quantum Mechanics

For example, insights from the field of quantum mechanics, while we cannot say “prove” that the Holy Spirit can and does live in humans, make “Christ in you” far more plausible than ever before. The study of physics seeks to describe the world of the “seeable.” But quantum mechanics, a subdivision of physics, seeks to describe the invisible nano world of matter beneath the size of the atom—quarks, photons, leptons, ions, hadrons—and other subatomic particles:

“Quantum mechanics” is the description of the behavior of matter and light in all its details and, in particular, of the happenings on an atomic scale. Things on a very small scale behave like nothing that you have any direct experience about. They do not behave like waves, they do not behave like particles, they do not behave like clouds, or billiard balls, or weights on springs, or like anything that you have ever seen... . Because atomic behavior is so unlike ordinary experience, it is very difficult to get used to, and it appears peculiar and mysterious to everyone—both to the novice and to the experienced physicist. Even the experts do not understand it the way they would like to... . We know how large objects will act, but things on a small scale just do not act that way. So we have to learn about them in a sort of abstract or imaginative fashion and not by connection with our direct experience.²¹¹

Chalmers S. Sherwin adds: “[T]he atomic world is characterized by a type of discontinuous behavior not known to the macroscopic world to which our senses have most direct access... . [Yet] few theories in the history of science have been as successful as quantum mechanics. In its domain of application... it now reigns supreme, and is likely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future.”²¹² Do the “laws of physics” govern events taking place in the “natural world,” and the “laws of sub-atomic particles” or quantum mechanics direct events we have held to be supernatural?

Quantum mechanics is neither good nor bad, yet its applications can span the spectrum from nuclear-fission bombs to modern time-saving devices. The puzzling contrast between the principles governing the macrocosm and those governing the microcosm has not kept science from making practical use of quantum mechanics. Have you had an MRI, a CAT scan, or an ultrasound? If so, you have utilized quantum mechanics-based science, for these valuable diagnostic tools came out of it. Quantum mechanics tells of electromagnetic energy supplying a mysterious connection between living things, something invisible but real. Quantum mechanics suggests that “God... manifests as a divine, nonlocal, subtle energy that is everywhere and in everything... .”²¹³ Does this sound similar to Scripture’s description of the Holy Spirit, an

invisible but real presence in our world connecting, protecting, and bringing order?

God operates through established laws, presumably in the realm we call “supernatural” as well as that of the natural. Was He operating through the laws governing the microcosm when He healed the Roman centurion’s servant? “Speak the word only,” the officer pled.

“I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel,”²¹⁴ said Jesus in reply. And the servant, though a distance from Christ, was immediately healed. Today, besides the almost magical *diagnostic* tools emerging from quantum mechanics, it offers *healing* tools as well. However, the medical community has not received these as warmly, as these tools offer healing to patients located not only geographically close but also located at a distance from both equipment and technician—a fact that may give pause to the field of medicine.

What will Christendom do with quantum mechanics? The MRI, CAT scan, and ultrasound provide health professionals with almost miraculous diagnostic tools. Might an objective mechanism drive quantum mechanics’ healing modalities as well? Has science thoroughly explored this possibility?

“Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and *as thou hast believed*, so be it done unto thee.”²¹⁵

For millennia Scripture has directed God’s children to simply believe Him and to walk in this belief. Quantum mechanics may be exposing some of the natural laws that make faith “work.” There appears to be a large and ever growing body of evidence to support it. If true, surely it must intersect with Christianity in ways that perhaps remain to be understood.

Dimensions

Scripture speaks casually of many amazing things Christians take for granted. It speaks of supernatural beings—heavenly and otherwise—flitting in and out of the visible world. A prophet, Daniel, began to pray. As he completed his prayer, an angel visitor announced his presence in the room with him. How did that angel transcend the enormous distance between earth and heaven in so little time? Scripture tells of a heavenly being rising heavenward in a flame of fire and vanishing from sight. It tells of supernatural fire from the heavens, of Jesus ascending heavenward in a cloud. It says He will come again and at His coming the heavens will roll together like a scroll.

Christians have always taken such concepts in stride, never doubting that such things are possible. Some of the “supernaturalness” of Christian thought, however, has not appealed to those who prefer a consistently tangible, predictable world.

Today some theoretical physicists postulate the presence of dimensions in the universe, from the infinitesimally small to infinitely large. Anomalies in measurements of both the microcosm and the macrocosm suggest to these scientists the presence of “something” many believe to be hidden dimensions, parallel universes, or pockets invisible to our eyes, which may house *anything*, including another whole population of intelligent beings. A Harvard professor and major voice among these scientists, Lisa Randall, Ph.D., theoretical physicist and dimensions researcher, discusses the prospect of the universe’s dimensions in her 2005 book, *Warped Passages*.²¹⁶ Here in part is a review:

Randall works hard to make her astoundingly complex material understandable, providing a great deal of background for recent advances in string and supersymmetry theory. As coauthor of the two most important scientific papers on this topic, she’s ideally suited to popularize the idea. What is absolutely clear is that physicists simply do not yet know if there are extra dimensions a fraction of a millimeter in size, dimensions of infinite size or only the dimensions we see. . . . Randall brings much of the excitement of her field to life as she describes her quest to understand the structure of the universe. B & W illus. Agent, John Brockman, (Sept. 1)” *Publishers Weekly* (Copyright Reed Business Information, Inc.).²¹⁷

In mid-2008, as presently scheduled, the hadron collider [LHC], a new, highly anticipated, powerful tool for study of the microcosm, will begin testing in Switzerland. Excitement pervades the world of physics, as it anticipates this instrument’s coming online. Among other purposes, it should provide the needed information to greatly advance human understanding of dimensions in the universe.

What a coincidence! Science appears to be catching up to the Bible, which was founded on a belief in another dimension where invisible beings dwell, making Scripture light years ahead of contemporary physics.

When Scripture assures us that the Holy Spirit walks with us, that angels—both good and bad—inhabit our environment, though we see them not, is it becoming progressively less possible to deny it? Are invisible dimensions, parallel universes, where these beings may dwell, a real possibility?

Sound

We have already mentioned the impact of sound on the human body. A number of researchers today find its creative potential intriguing. They have learned, for example, that the right sounds can improve athletic performance, increase intelligence, promote health. Leeds states, “Future medicine may prescribe tones in the way that doctors today prescribe pharmaceuticals.”²¹⁸

Scientists now know that sound feeds the brain and nervous systems. When hearing diminishes through stress, aging, or for any reason, it affects human functional abilities.²¹⁹ Knowledge of sound's power may be among the wisdom known anciently but lost through time until today's research scientists brought it back into the spotlight. Their findings not only bring creative speaking into the realm of the possible but actually raise it to a new level.

Some of today's most fascinating research comes from the laboratories of contemporary sound investigators, preeminent among them those in the field of cymantics.

Cymantics

The science of cymantics dates back to the mid-nineteenth century and began when Ernst Chladni (1756-1829) published a book of what came to be known as Chladni figures. He demonstrated that one can create delicate geometric patterns through applying sound to substances on plates of various materials, altered through frequency, amplitude, vibration, and the material or substance used to create the design—talc, light powdered sand, viscous liquid, or other matter. Through the years a number of researchers contributed to the field. The late Hans Jenny, father of modern cymantics, published his fascinating results in 1967.

Dr. Masaru Emoto, a contemporary researcher, applied cymantics, the science of creative sound, to ice crystals, creating many beautiful and delicate designs. His research also appears to reveal which kinds of water possess the greatest creativity, as the figures show up better in some types of water than in others.

Although beautiful, of course, the figures have no life. They prove nothing, but they do hint of the wonderful creative power of sound vibrations, especially the sound of the human voice. If sound can create these fascinating patterns and pictures, is it possible that the "right" sounds from our own voices can create beauty and life in our world? "Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning... . This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit."²²⁰ Does this mean the Holy Spirit will teach all language groups better principles of speaking unknown to the world at large? Principles perhaps that have power to bring good into our day-to-day experience?

DNA

In the last few decades researchers have advanced exponentially in knowledge of DNA. Most of us are aware of the use of DNA in law enforcement, paternity determination, and establishing ancestry of population groups. DNA is as unique as a fingerprint, and many criminals have, figuratively speaking, "bitten the dust" via a blow from their own DNA. But DNA is far more interesting than merely as a tool to fight crime. Leonard Horowitz, DMD, MA, MPH, in *DNA: Pirates of the Sacred Spiral*, delineates some of the other new and exciting information emerging regarding DNA.

Among other things, it seems DNA is an electromagnetic receiver and transmitter. It is "the ideal super conductor, and micro-antennae, designed to perfection beyond the reach of the wildest imagination."²²¹ Our bodies contain elements analogous to those existing in electronics—such as TVs and computers—that enable us to capture signals out of thin air and transform them into coherent and usable forms.²²² Our DNA appears to be a center for this activity, as it powerfully receives and transmits bioacoustic and electromagnetic signals from our surroundings, including healing cosmic signals.²²³ Most of us know our bodies run on electricity we apparently pull out of the air. The study of DNA may hold the key to a better understanding of our electrical nature. Interference with these natural transmissions from man-made electromagnetic fields existing in our modern world may be more troubling than we have thought.

In addition, DNA appears especially receptive to sound. One researcher teamed up with his wife, an accomplished musician, to set the four strands of DNA to music. Each strand—adenine, guanine, cytosine and thymine—was assigned a musical value—do, ray, me, faw—then they repeated the strands with so, law, tee, do. They then composed a symphony based solely on their DNA, performed it for an audience, and listeners expressed that the result was not unlike the works of the great composers.²²⁴

Think what these functions of DNA may mean in the spiritual sense. Does the Holy Spirit invisibly connect with our DNA, as we might take a friend by the hand? Is this the source of the electricity that maintains our life? Is the energetic atmosphere transmitted around the true Christian composed of the life the Holy Spirit brings to us? These are speculations about mysterious things, but they do provide a *way of thinking* about the invisible that can make the gospel model more real to us. Perhaps the Holy Spirit exists in this invisible sphere as "God with us." Perhaps it's more real than we imagined. Skeptics, beware the dogmatic. There is just too much we don't know.

The Knowing Heart

There is something about the heart—something different and mysterious. When science solves a problem, often two or more new enigmas arise from that solution to take its place. Medical science can now replace body organs, including the heart. But with this advance in knowledge comes new mystery. Could Scripture have understood something about it in comparing “heart” with “mind?”

The ancient Egyptians removed all bodily organs from the deceased in their mummification practices. That is, all organs except the heart. They believed the heart possessed the essence of the person, the thinking, feeling mind and personality. The modern field of organ transplantation has solved a medical problem and given a new lease on life to innumerable patients who would die without this life-saving strategy. But with the solution has come the mystery of cellular memories. It appears that the larger the donation—say, heart *and* lung—the greater the odds this mystery will appear—the mystery of the knowing heart.

Organ (especially heart) transplant recipients frequently report dramatic changes in personality and taste that strangely mimic those of their organ donor. For example, a sixteen-month-old baby, Jerry, drowned in a bathtub, and Carter, a seven-month-old boy, received his heart. Carter then began manifesting personality traits of his donor and showed unusual warmth toward his donor's mother, rubbing noses with her immediately, which was a play activity of her and her deceased son. The parents of donor Jerry, speaking for themselves and their relatives and acquaintances who knew both Jerry and Carter, expressed amazement at Carter's personality likeness to their son. The mother, a physician, stated, “On some level, our son is still alive.”²²⁵

Another child, a boy of three, fell from a ledge, and his heart went to five-year-old Darryl. Neither Darryl nor his parents knew the donor's age or name, only that he was a child who had died in a fall.

Darryl began talking about and to his donor heart. He named the heart Timmy and said Timmy used to like Power Rangers but didn't like them any more. Darryl said he too had outgrown his interest in Power Rangers.

Darryl's parents eventually learned the donor's name—Timmy. It seems Timmy had fallen from a ledge reaching for a Power Ranger.²²⁶

Innumerable stories could be cited of the phenomenon of personality changes manifesting in individuals soon after they received a heart transplant—changes reflecting their donor's personality. This has led a prominent transplant surgeon to question whether they were doing organ transplants or body transplants. Did the ancients know the secret of heart memories? Did they know what modern science is only now coming to

explore? Might the elusive brain center of the subconscious reside in the human heart?

This is admittedly speculation, but speculation has its place. All the great discoveries of humanity began when someone speculated it might be so and moved forward to explore the possibility. We may be far from proving it as a fact, and perhaps it can never be proven. However, our new awareness of personality existing in body cells, especially of the heart, may provide us with a benign *way of thinking* about this mystery.

Why does Scripture place such emphasis on the heart? "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his *heart* was only evil continually."²²⁷ "The Lord hardened Pharaoh's *heart*."²²⁸ "Keep your *heart* with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life."²²⁹ Is it the real seat of the essence of the human? Could it be the elusive brain center of the subconscious, the locale where the human first plays host to the Holy Spirit? Perhaps the possibility can make the concept of "Christ in you" more real to us, taking it out of the realm of the theoretical and bringing Christ, through the Holy Spirit, "out of the box" in which we tend to keep Him, making Him ever more real in our day-to-day life. For now, that may be the best that can be said.

“OH, MAGNIFY THE LORD WITH ME...

And let us exalt His name together!”
(Psalm 34:3)

A gloom lay over the land of Goshen. Pharaoh had ordered the Hebrew midwives not to allow male babies to live. Although they defied his command, grave danger still confronted male babies, if their existence became known to Pharaoh, who now ordered that they be thrown into the Nile. Amram and Jochebed hid baby Moses three months but at last could conceal him no longer. Jochebed made a basket of bulrushes, put baby Moses in it, and laid the basket in the reeds at the river's edge. Moses' sister, Miriam, played nearby, secretly watching to see what would become of him.

No doubt much prayer ascended to heaven on the baby's behalf, from Amram and Jochebed, from Miriam, as they pondered the baby's fate. Soon a royal party came near. Miriam prayed, “Oh, please let them pass by.” But they stopped near the basket.

“Oh, Lord, if you ever kept the baby quiet, keep him quiet now,” prayed Miriam.

Did the baby suddenly let out a howl that reverberated off every tree, plant and building in the area? Miriam's heart sank. All was lost. Now her baby brother's life would be taken.

We know the rest of the story. Pharaoh's daughter fell in love with the beautiful child and adopted him as her own. Quick thinking, or more likely some heavenly prompting, sent Miriam to the scene to offer her mother's services as wet nurse for the baby. Where appearances spelled disaster, God

created the safest possible harbor for the infant, where he could grow to manhood and fulfill his important destiny.

But it didn't turn out at all the way Amram, Jochebed, and Miriam expected.

Sometimes when we pray, everything seems to go "wrong." Thus it is important to understand that the principles here set out *always* work, regardless of appearances.

Always? Logic dictates that we use this word sparingly. We seldom use "all" or "always" in writing. As soon as we commit to "all," "always," or "never," the exception jumps up and bites us. However, that is not the case in the present setting. As we walk by faith, the principles *always* work. Does this mean things always turn out exactly the way we intend? Not at all. It means that *no matter how things turn out*, as we praise the Lord and worship Him, we receive the outcome as God's perfect will in the matter. Only with this approach can we cooperate with God, who often takes us by strange paths, through experiences we would never choose for ourselves, to the place He has in mind for us. As baby Moses may have cried at what, to Miriam, seemed the worst possible moment, God's plans may violate human reasoning. Thus the importance of praising Him in all things.

So often, what God is able to do for us depends upon our operating out of faith (believing His word) when confronted with threatening or confusing circumstances. When we do not understand our circumstances ("Why would God do this?"), it is important to know that *He* understands them and is working out His good plans for us in spite of any appearances to the contrary.

God's Purpose For You

Did you know that God has a purpose for your life? Both the *New International Version* and the *Revised Standard Version* of the Holy Scriptures translate Psalm 138:8: "The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me."

It is not a mistake that we live on this planet. Our background be what it may, it seems God has a purpose for your life and for mine. He can use us for a holy purpose. But sometimes self-management interferes with His purpose, landing us in bad places and jeopardizing His plan in creating us. Amazingly, when we commit to Him and determine to live for Him by faith in and from that very moment, there is no situation He cannot turn around. There is no place from which He cannot bring us back and cause us to fulfill His purpose, blessing us and those about us in the process. He can take us in that undesirable place, like a great heavenly "Fulfillment Machine" and make us complete whatever His plans for us may be. It is critically important

during this process to understand that the principles of faith *always* work; therefore, we can praise Him at all times. God may take us to unexpected places, through experiences that might not be our first choice. Our role is to believe that He is with us, working through those experiences to fulfill His good plan for us. Our role is faithfully, humbly to serve Him and those about us, doing the duty that lies nearest, listening to the impressions of the Spirit, studying His will in His word.

This view comes with Biblical authority. "And we know that *all things* work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."²³⁰ Do you believe it? Then praise Him no matter what. "In *everything* give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."²³¹ Our Creator's commitments to His created may be the only sphere in the universe where the words "only," "all," and "everything" can be used accurately. When our surrender to Him is real, God operates toward us as a loving Friend. He guides our decision-making, as we stay in communion connection with Him. Discouragement and disappointment need not exist in such a life, because all is working to our good. No repining; no feelings of having disappointed Him because our lives didn't turn out the way we planned. Maybe He has a different plan. The present moment—how precious it is. Everything flows out of it. God keeps His own in perfect peace, sheltered with Him in the present moment.

A fellow I know, a renter, learned the principles, and a day came when he suffered a financial reversal, which he could ill afford. Although the blow struck him hard, he resolved to praise the Lord for His blessings anyway. He found, in thinking about it, that he still had many. *A day later* an opportunity dropped into his lap to purchase a home. Since the owner carried the contract, he paid it off like rent. You couldn't convince him there was not a direct connection between praising the Lord through bad times, to his wonderful new home.

How much more real God must have seemed to him in the day to day, as he reflected on His great mercy in providing a home for him that he could easily afford.

The Dust Devil

Kevin flew west down the freeway in his new sports car. How thankful he was for the seventy-five miles per hour speed limit along this stretch. Nothing matched the freedom of the open road. He moved into the fast lane to pass a slower moving car. Just as he got to the front of the other vehicle, he saw a giant, whirling dust devil form across the borrow pit beside the eastbound lane. He didn't remember ever seeing one that looked so huge and menacing.

forming suddenly and racing toward him as if aimed at his car. He couldn't slow down in time to avoid it. The car he just passed blocked his access to the right lane, denying him any navigating room.

He had become familiar within the past few months with the language of heaven and its principles of living by faith. The words "meet it" sounded in his mind. He began praising the Lord for deliverance, all the while seeing in his mind a multi-car pile up rolling over the right-hand embankment.

A dust devil much smaller than this had almost picked up the car of a friend and sent it reeling into a ditch. This one could do far greater damage.

Just as the dust devil met his car it dissipated with a touch as gentle as a feather. Coincidence? You couldn't convince Kevin it was a coincidence. Nor could you convince those of us who have tried the language of heaven and found it works consistently.

The Foundation

In our fallen world of sin God surely knew that humans, in dealing with everyday challenges would need a structure that would give Him access to them and would enable Him to help lift their burdens. He gave them such a plan and called it "faith."

The prevalence of faith-like principles in the world today attests to their antiquity. But the gospel does not comprise merely one competing package among the myriads of self-help theories alive and circulating in the winds of our modern times. No. They exist as the foundation, the beginning of them all. Where other cultures and worldviews offer something vaguely similar (yet with the inevitable soul-destroying twist, teaching that the power is innate within the human), their versions succeed because they *counterfeit* the powerful, original gospel principles. Abraham, though struggling and often failing, finally understood them, for the gospel was preached to Abraham.²³² When he and Sarah finally "got it," the child of promise was born. Thus Abraham is called the father of the lineage of faith.²³³ Because God has but one way of saving humans, it makes sense that faith principles trace back to earth's first parents, the fallen Adam and Eve, and were known by them.

As God created our planet—the heavens and the earth (though humans have generally chosen to believe otherwise), just as surely He established the principles of faith as described in Holy Scripture, even though counterfeit theories abound. These principles are as solid as His throne. As they came from Him, it was surely His purpose that they would also lead the children of earth back to Him.

How can we know that God's plan came first? Because He is Creator of heavens and earth. Nothing came before the Creator. These powerful gospel

principles even predate our world's existence, for God ordained them and held them in secret since eternity past, before this world began.²³⁴ Not until the fall of Adam was the plan revealed.

Imagine the shock of the angels to hear that Christ would pay the sin price—die for the lost planet. Do you suppose He asked them the question, “If I die the sinner’s death, will you accept it for the entirety of the fallen population?” After all, these holy beings would one day have to live with the renovated citizens of earth. Their opinion mattered. Yes, they may have expressed, but how could the fallen ones be made safe to save?

Ah, the second part of the plan would meet that need. “They will give me *their* sins, and I will take *their* consequences,” He may have said. Then, if they consent, I will live in them by the Holy Spirit, bringing *my* qualities of character and *my* eternal life into *their* everyday life. It would be an exchange. We’ll call it “faith.”

But His principles of faith have become perverted. Now, instead of a means to re-unite divinity and humanity—the Holy Spirit with you and with me, rebellion has warped these principles into a method of “getting” from the universe. The carnal human heart wants the gifts, but without the need for surrender, without the need for cleansing of the life, without the connection with Him. Worse, in some instances the principles of faith are “marketed” with the idea that humans can themselves become gods—a proposal as false today as when the serpent beguiled Eve in Eden with the thought that if she and Adam ate the forbidden fruit they would “be as gods.”²³⁵

Our culture places great value on material blessings, and the God of Scripture promises us these—abundance in this life and eternity in a perfect world to come. But for the Christian the gifts of God do not outweigh the value of the presence of the loving Giver. In fact, to the Christian the presence of God is the richest gift of all.

The Lost Airline Ticket

My friend, Lois, flew with another friend to the home of relatives in Roseburg, Oregon, with a stopover in Portland. They intended to drive a car home; therefore their tickets were one-way which instantly flagged the duo as possible security risks. At the air terminal to board the plane for the flight south, agents herded them into a stall to inspect their belongings more closely. Each agent looked at their tickets, passing them back and forth to each other and laying them in various places. When the tickets finally came back to her, Lois stuck them into her purse to assure they would not be lost. After killing some time window shopping and enjoying a snack, as it neared

time to meet their plane, they wandered back to the boarding area. Lois checked her purse and found only one ticket.

Instant panic ensued. They re-traced their steps but couldn't locate the ticket. They had no idea whether they could have a duplicate issued, as time for their plane's arrival rapidly approached. Then Lois remembered that God was with her and that she could depend upon Him. Nothing could happen to her outside His authority and power. She began to praise the Lord in her heart and mind. She gave the problem up to Him, resting in the assurance that all things, including the ticket, including this present moment, were in His hands. He could find the ticket. She and her friend began talking with a lady seated across from them, telling her about the lost ticket. Lois then decided to visit the ladies' room, as time for the plane's appearing neared.

When she returned, her friend held something up in front of her nose. It was the ticket. Someone seated a distance from them overheard the conversation about the lost ticket. While she was gone, a gentleman in a pink shirt brought it over, asking if this was the ticket they had lost. What were the odds, in that huge airport crowd, when they had wandered the length and breadth of the place—that the ticket would come back to them so easily? Who knows where they lost it. But someone in their own boarding area had found it. Lois will tell you, only God can do that.

Coincidence? Nothing happens by chance in the life of a Christian. Those who have spent their lives scooping up ashes from a lifetime of effort, who suddenly find things working and life going smoothly, will tell you it was learning to speak confidence in God's word that made the difference.

The Traffic Ticket

One of the best aspects of the language of heaven is teaching it to our children. Chaundra had recently moved back into town and was re-establishing her life in the local area. She had just located an apartment and had begun a new job, when on her way to work one day, the morning sun in her face, she was already through the intersection before realizing it. The siren and rotating light in her rear view mirror told her she had been seen. "You drove through a red light," said the officer.

"I didn't see that light," said Chaundra.

"Nevertheless, the price for driving through a red light is one hundred fifty dollars," the officer said, as he wrote out the ticket. She also must come to court and appear before a judge.

"I cannot pay this ticket," Chaundra told her mother, Kathy, on the phone later in the day. "That's all I have for groceries."

"Please don't worry about it, Chaundra," said Kathy. "God will help you take care of it. I don't know how, but praise Him for every good thing you can think of. As often as you think about the ticket, give thanks to God. 'All things work together for good,' the Bible says. Don't worry. It will work out okay."

At last her court date arrived. When the bailiff called her name, Chaundra stepped forward. The bailiff called the officer who had written her the ticket. No one stood up or came forward. The bailiff again called the officer's name. When again the officer failed to step forward, the judge dismissed the case. It could not go forward without the testimony of the complaining officer.

Chaundra called her mother greatly excited, telling her of the wonderful miracle that had taken place. Do you think this young woman will ever forget how real God was at that moment? Will this memory have drawing power on Chaundra's life, to direct her heavenward? God loves to reveal His nearness to us in the events of our everyday life.

Spiritual Authority

Chaundra's story raises some issues regarding what may appear as "gray areas" of spiritual authority. She had made no formal commitment to God, and yet He blessed her. God has full jurisdiction in the lives of those who have sincerely committed to Him. It should not surprise us then to see His blessings in their lives. But we often see great blessings in the lives of the uncommitted, such as this answer to Chaundra's needs. Can we derive principles that will help us understand the anomalies, when the righteous suffer and others appear to prosper? Do principles govern these things?

In Chaundra's case her mother's commitment to God may have provided the spiritual authority for God to meet her need. Prayers of parents for children seem to have great power with God. He knows that our children's needs lie closest to our hearts.

But another truth transcends this. God's bounties, bought for us on Calvary, appear everywhere. He "makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."²³⁶ All good, wherever found, originates with our loving heavenly Father. If God had His way, all would be blessed, all the time. Our world continues only because God has wrapped it in a blanket of "common" grace—grace to all—the precious though sometimes overlooked gift of Calvary. Clear principles govern these things, but the enemy's smoke and mirrors have confused and blinded us regarding them.

Two basic factors can cut off the blessings of God:

1. Our *willful disobedience* puts God in a position where, in order to protect us, He would have to compromise our free will, crowding Himself into our lives in spite of our wishes, when we have made it perfectly clear to humans and to the invisible world that we do not like His ways. Is our walk, our “conversation,” our way of life such as He would enjoy sharing? Just as certain lifestyles do not appeal to us, just as we cannot walk with those of certain ways, God cannot associate intimately with the flagrantly unrighteous. He cannot. And when we walk apart from Him, our enemy the destroyer, can enter to have his way with us.

2. Our impulsive, unprincipled decision making often violates laws that govern, for example, our health, our finances, our interpersonal relationships. When we ignore the principles, we risk suffering the consequences.

This may appear simplistic. Yes, there are the times when, for an eternal purpose God may release the “hedge” about us, as He did in the case of Job. There are other instances where misfortune occurs as the result of the sins of others. We live in a world suffering the consequences of millennia of sin, and most of us have experienced those consequences first-hand. Even the human genetic pool in some ways reflects our common downward spiral. For all these reasons, we cannot judge the misfortunes of others. We have no idea the cause, when it comes to someone else’s life. But inculcating into our thinking the simple principles outlined herein can provide a useful framework for climbing our own lives out of the muddy pit many of us have spent a lifetime digging ourselves into.

Here, in a nutshell, are the principles:

- God is love.
- For His children, all things work together for good.
- Therefore, we can praise Him in all things.
- His word is true, regardless of appearances.
- When things go “wrong,” wait and watch in expectation of the good, praising Him with heart and voice.

- Because God gives to all, regardless of their spiritual condition, the principles often appear to work in the lives of the unsaved.
- Satan can prosper his own in order to confuse us. But he can also turn on his own at any moment. Therefore, our prosperity or lack of it is a gauge only to ourselves. We don't know what God is doing in someone else's life. Therefore, let us avoid judging others. We have enough to work on in our own lives.

Books could be (and have been) written on each point. We are sometimes the enemy's greatest agents in our own adversity. We hand him the club with which to beat us. We shun godly principles in favor of pop culture, giving the enemy virtually unrestricted access to our lives to damage the things we value most. "The world," often looking askance at Christians, goes merrily forth, thinking they stand; all the while vulnerable to Satan, giving him footholds for destroying their own lives.

Yet God says the principles *always* work. "And we know that *all things* work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."²³⁷ As we believe God and praise Him that His word is true, He can bring us through terrible problems to the good outcome He has in mind for us on the other side.

And let's remember to keep it real. Let not praise descend into a mindless mantra. We don't get "points" toward salvation for our praise, and heaven knows if we mean it. Leave the swaying self-hypnosis to the "druggies" in the remote, primitive places of earth and in the darkened dance halls of our modern times. These pitiful victims of the enemy deserve our compassion, prayer, and ministry—not our imitation. All we need do to offer genuine praise and thanksgiving to God is to open our eyes, peek around our troubles, notice the good He brings us every day, and open our mouth in thanksgiving.

The Biggest Dream

Matt retired at sixty, eager to reap the rewards of his lifetime of hard work. That and his extreme intelligence took him to a place where everyone said he had "done very well for himself." He thought religion was for sissies and wanted nothing to do with it, as it was at odds with the best scientific thought regarding earth's beginnings and other things. He had no need for God in his life. He was doing quite well by himself, thank you very much. Working and making money left little time to explore (in his mind) absurdities, such as whether God existed.

Then suddenly it was over. He had not reached his sixty-fifth birthday, when a visit to his doctor confirmed he had terminal cancer.

What does one say to such a person at such a time as this? A family member tried to comfort him, asking, Have you done all you wanted to do? Have you fulfilled your dreams? Have you seen what you wanted to see?

He answered, "I feel like I just got started."

The secular may scoff at religion, but one thing they must admit. Death comes. Death is the point where, if never before, religion begins to make sense. Ironically, often those who have derived the greatest material benefit from life, who have enjoyed it the most, who may have the best understanding of the satisfaction life can bring, max out their days on earth, and it's over. They have no expectations beyond the grave of continuing their enjoyment into eternity. All they get is what they got.

A prominent figure in the entertainment world died following a long and successful career. He loved to work, had never retired, but in his early eighties, as he lay in his hospital bed the final week of his life, during his conscious moments one question persistently came from his lips, "Am I going to die?" It was as if the end had crept up and taken him unawares. It was as if a new concept. He was having such a great time; how could it end so abruptly, so disagreeably? Right in the middle of everything that mattered, death came to call.

Death of course, comes to Christians too, but with one huge difference at the end. For Christians the end is merely the beginning of life that never ends, a seam in a continuum that began when on earth they gave their lives to Christ. The Christian's enjoyment with life on this earth is but the preamble to joyful, never-ending life beyond the grave. Therefore, genuine Christians are at peace with whatever circumstances life lays before them—even the sleep of death.

Can a Christian enjoy material success in this life? Most certainly! Many wealthy Christians use money as a means to honor God and to support gospel work. Jesus came that we might have life and that more abundantly.²³⁸ However, He cautioned that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven.²³⁹ His amazed listeners believed that wealth derived from God's blessings, interpreting it as evidence of God's approval. Jesus offered a wholly new perspective that raised the respectability quotient for Christians of modest means for all future time.

"Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me."²⁴⁰ The Christian does not necessarily need wealth; all he or she needs is *enough*. And God has promised to supply it.²⁴¹ In wealth, as in so many areas of life, there is a tipping point beyond which wealth can

be more burden than blessing, a means to impress the world and another matter to take our time and attention. However, if wealth is your want or desire, that's exactly what you should pray for. You will find many promises of wealth in Scripture.

But, as a rule, Christians just want to know how to make their life work in the day to day, whether their goal is wealth or something else. The worst of circumstances, such as Job encountered, God does not choose for His children. He didn't in Job's case; He only *allowed* it to prove Job's loyalty. The apostle John speaks for our heavenly Father in saying He wants above all else that we prosper and be healthy, just as we prosper spiritually.²⁴² Let's banish from our mind any idea that God brings suffering in order to benefit us in some way. He does not. The negative circumstances God sometimes allows in our lives test whether we are yet living by faith principles, or still trying to manage life on our own. Praising God through the hard times shows that our faith is real. It draws God irresistibly into our circumstances, and He can handle any need of ours that might crop up.

But the Christian's mind is on a bigger prize. Above and beyond serving and glorifying God in this world, they look for eternal life in a perfect world—a goal not achievable on earth alone. None have aspired so high as the Christian. Eternal life in a perfect world is the biggest dream, the greatest prize. Our spiritual father Abraham, understood it and looked for a city with foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.²⁴³ The Book of Revelation²⁴⁴ describes this city as having twelve foundations, every one of a different precious stone. Twelve immense gates open on four sides of the city; each gate a single pearl. Night never falls there, because Jesus and the Father are its light. All tears are wiped away. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."²⁴⁵ The best day on earth is lame compared with the worst day in heaven. In the Savior's last talk with His disciples before Calvary, He assured them *this is real*.²⁴⁶ To live in such a world, unendingly, to associate with visible holy angels, to praise the visible Father and Son—this is the Christian's goal. If we get everything this world offers and miss it, we have missed everything.

It is hard to imagine there could be anything more—but wait! It was for the joy set before Him that Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame.²⁴⁷ What joy was set before Him? What did He see at that time that motivated Him to drink the cup of woe to its dregs, to actually die the sinner's death? Could it have been the thought that by His death He was putting earth's sin history away forever? Did He see us—perhaps you and me and innumerable others—enjoying those mansions, those streets of gold, the unending

pleasures of eternal happiness, beyond the ravages of this sin-cursed earth? To move beyond sin, beyond time to unending eternity—is this not the biggest prize of all? Was it thoughts such as these that made Him actually go through with His great sacrifice?

Scripture depicts the church as Christ's *bride*, an indication of the intensity of appreciation and love in her heart for the One who left heaven to come to this dark earth to die for her. *Agape*, complete other-centeredness, heaven's kind of love, is the kind of love He showed in making this great sacrifice. His *agape* placed her need above His own. It led Jesus out of the ivory palaces of heaven, into our dark world of sin to be our Savior. He could not be happy in the eternal world when we were without hope.

In earth's final chapter, this kind of love takes possession of the heart of the bride-church, as collectively Christians, seeing the pain sin has brought to the Father's heart, return Christ's *agape* love. They see that, as much grief as humans have experienced in this sin-cursed world, God's has been far greater. We are often horrified at the depths of evil existing in our world. But we see only its tip. God sees it all. He has experienced its results in His own life. He had to stand aside and allow His precious Son to experience the sinner's death. Had He gone to Jesus' aid, you and I would be without hope beyond death. We are allotted "threescore and ten"²⁴⁸ years to endure this world of sin, but it's been in God's face since the beginning and will be until it is put away *forever*. If Christians are not moved to think of the grief sin has brought to the pure heart of God, then something is truly wrong.

Far beyond the Christian's longing for personal salvation lies *God's need* to put the existence of sin into history. The prophet Daniel quotes a heavenly angel in expressing God's desire: He wants "To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins ... to bring in everlasting righteousness."²⁴⁹

Most Christians believe we live at a time in earth's history when this prospect can be realized. Motivated by the cross, the church asks: How can we meet God's need, as He gave everything to meet our need? As Christ's bride, what can the church do to open wide the gate, that the King of glory can return to take us home and end the reign of sin forever? The answer is so simple.

Christ's bride can, collectively, begin to live by faith. It was when Enoch walked with God that he was not, for God took him.²⁵⁰ It is amazing how few Christians understand the full range of faith principles. We have not understood how the principles connect and work together to enable us to walk with the Savior. We have not realized that this walk with God alone gives us the righteousness heaven requires. We have not experienced the good that God desires to bring into our lives through this connection. We have

been like unruly dancers, everyone doing his or her own thing, expecting God to do something spectacular for us, while we are in such a state of disarray. We have been like an orchestra, each musician following his own muse and ignoring the Conductor, who can only harmonize us through gospel principles. We have forgotten that the gospel is God's *power* to make it all happen,"²⁵¹ and "Christ in you, the hope of glory," is the *power generator*.

Laodicea

Let's talk about Laodicea.²⁵² Without question she is a church, the bride of Christ, the last of the seven churches of Revelation, just as the church today could well be the last of the churches before Christ returns. But she has lots of problems.

She is lukewarm. She feels no needs. How can she walk with God without feeling a need of some kind? The True Witness says she needs "gold tried in the fire." What does this mean? "The *trial* of your *faith*, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire."²⁵³ "When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold."²⁵⁴ Laodicea needs lots of "lab opportunity" trials to which she responds with faith in order to recognize how closely the Lord walks with her day by day. She needs the white robe of Christ's righteousness, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, walking with and in the human. She needs eye salve, the ability to "see" into the larger world beyond human vision to perceive the truth of events taking place around her. She needs to learn to live by faith.

If ever we wondered why God has not yet called an end to earth's sin history, the True Witness tells us here: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."²⁵⁵ God is *outside* the church. He is knocking, longing to come into fully surrendered Christians, to let us know He's with us. He can take care of us. We can only learn this as we begin living by faith. Faith thinks differently from the carnal mind. Faith brings the Holy Spirit from our lives' periphery into the very center. Faith puts the Holy Spirit in His rightful place, on the throne of our heart, where He can do far more for us than simply keep us from destroying ourselves.

When He has a people—not just a person here and there—thinking and living in this new way, then the great prize of the ages—the end of sin—can become a reality.

The Fifty-Dollar Bill

Ron learned the principles of the language of heaven in his weekly Bible study class and was having great fun putting them into practice. He found his

Christian experience enhanced as he developed the habit of being grateful in all things. His walk with God took on a new luster, as he practiced speaking the word over his daily experience and thanking God that, Amen, *It is so*.

On a certain day Ron, a single fellow, basked in the pleasure of knowing God was with him. His life seemed to go more smoothly than ever before. He felt secure and cradled in God's loving hands, as he turned his car into the driveway of the bank.

The week had been busy for him; with no time to cook he had to rely on fast-food restaurants for his meals, thus he decided to stop at the bank and get change to purchase a burrito at a nearby restaurant. He had carried two fifties and one one-hundred dollar bill in his wallet for awhile. Today he would break one of the fifties, get himself a burrito, and conserve lots of his valuable time in the process.

When he broke into his "stash," he found only *one* fifty and one one-hundred dollar bill. He quickly thumbed through the papers in his wallet. The second fifty was nowhere to be found. I must have spent it, he thought, as he approached the teller's window. "May I have change, please?" he asked the teller, handing her the remaining fifty. It was a new bank to him, and he had made none of the usual acquaintances typical of a long-term relationship with a business. No one knew his name. Simply getting change gave bank personnel no way to identify him if the need arose.

As he exited the bank the thought occurred to him that he should take advantage of the beautiful autumn day to walk to the restaurant. Leaving his car parked, he struck out walking, crossed the street, and headed for a short cut across a vacant lot and down an alley. He had gone about one hundred yards when he heard excited voices behind him. "Mister, mister; did you lose some money? Did you lose a fifty?"

He turned around in shock to see some bank customers and one of the tellers, standing outside the bank, looking at him intently. "I wondered where that went," he said, as he and the teller closed the distance between each other. The teller held out the fifty. Ron reached for it, still in a state of shock. He thought of all the reasons this could not be happening. First, he did not know for sure he had lost the money; he assumed he must have spent it. He couldn't remember ever before, leaving his car at the bank to walk anywhere. Ordinarily, he would have exited the bank, gotten into his car, and drove off, leaving absolutely no way for bank employees to find him. It was fifty dollars *in cash*. How easily someone could have said, "finders, keepers" and pocketed the bill.

It is fulfilling beyond description to live by faith, he later expressed to his Bible study group. But now and then it appears God orders our circumstances

in such a way that faith almost gives way to sight, as events reassure us of divine, heavenly presence in the moments of our days.

Strawberry Glenn

Barbara had lived almost a decade in her mobile home by the river at the end of Strawberry Glenn Road. Before new people moved into the park, they would ask the owner, "Do you plan to sell this property?" It was within walking distance of the post office, city hall, Walmart, Albertsons, several banks and numerous other shops and restaurants. It seemed a choice location and certainly valuable, but the owner always said he could not sell the property due to a clause in the trust that owned it. It could not be sold until the third generation from the original owner, and this was but the second generation. Virtually everyone in the park knew of the clause.

Barbara loved her mobile home, the location and her neighbors. Even though developers were buying up mobile home parks all over the valley, Barbara and her neighbors had no concerns. The clause secured their homes.

One day they noticed surveyors working on Strawberry Glenn and in the park. Neighbors began calling each other, and finally someone got up nerve to call the owner. "What are the surveyors doing here?" they asked. "This property cannot be sold."

But it had sold, and Barbara and her neighbors, with no advance warning, had to move. Soon a letter arrived from the new owner's attorney. You have six months to leave the park. Take your mobile homes with you. If you leave them and the developer has to move them, you will be sued for the moving expense.

Moving a mobile home costs several thousand dollars, but the news was even worse. Every mobile home in the park was old and by state law could not be moved without costly "upgrading," which meant the outlay of several thousand more dollars. In short, in order to comply with the new owner's eviction notice, several, including Barbara, would have to spend more on the mobiles than their mobiles' fair market value. Yet sitting in the park under an eviction order, the mobile homes were worth less than nothing. They would cost money even to demolish and discard. The owners couldn't move their homes and couldn't stay in the park.

Yet Barbara knew the Lord and His word. She knew that nothing could happen to her except good, because God had promised that "all things work together for good." She had no idea what to do. Not only did she seem to be losing her home, but she would have to pay for the loss. Something about it did not compute. Daily she stayed in communion with God and tried

to encourage the neighbors, counting her blessings with thanksgiving. The months ticked by, as they sought a resolution of their dilemma.

An attorney agreed to mediate between them and the new park owner, but the owner was inflexible. He offered no assistance whatever to the tenants. They made an effort to contact the media. The first time it failed. The second effort months later, succeeded, calling in public opinion on their behalf. Still the park owner refused to help.

Finally, after many months an agency appeared from nowhere, obtained a grant from somewhere and assisted those still in the park to leave. Most of the mobile home owners had either abandoned their homes or given them away, incurring financial loss and, in some cases, legal liability. But out of twenty-five families originally living in the park, Barbara's home and the homes of two others were upgraded and relocated intact, without any cost to them. When moved, their mobiles were of greater value than before the move, leading Barbara's brother to comment that she was better off after the ordeal than when it began. Her victory, for which she gives God all the glory, was even reported in the local newspaper. Barbara kept the clippings to document the victory of the word of God over adverse circumstances.

She will tell you it was because she believed God's word, which promises, "I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread."²⁵⁶ She'll tell you that promise pertains to saving mobile homes as well as anything else.

But Barbara says the benefit she values most is the growing knowledge that Christ walks with her in her daily life, just as He promises in His word.

GOD'S HIDDEN AGENDA

“(T)he ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with songs
and everlasting joy upon their heads:
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away”
(Isaiah 35:10, KJV).

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

With these familiar words Scripture starts the account of how life came to Planet Earth. We have marveled at the depth and simplicity of the words. Even the Apollo 8 astronauts on a space mission around the moon Christmas Eve, 1968, found nothing more fitting for that special moment than to read from the Bible account of creation in Genesis 1.

“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.”

Yet as we have considered with awe those deep and moving words, it is even more intriguing to consider *why* He created. Why bother to create this world? What was in His mind? Scripture offers abundant clues we have, perhaps to our loss, overlooked or ignored that reveal His thinking when He embarked upon the project.

He “built” the earth in a reasonable way—first the light, then the dry land separated from the waters. Next He covered the land with verdure—grass, trees, bushes, and plant life. Then came the fish, birds, and animals. He was going for something. What?

When perfection gleamed from every nook and cranny of this new world, He made the crowning work; humans—a man and a woman—put them in this perfect place, and told them to reproduce and replenish the earth. Clearly, humans were the reason for it all. For *them* He created this lush and inviting world. It was for their comfort, pleasure, and instruction.

Notice, *the very next day* following creation of humans, He, perhaps in eagerness, created a special period *of time* in which they could lay aside their daily, worldly pursuits and spend quality time with Him. (See Genesis 2:2, 3.) This was His “payoff.” It was perhaps analogous to couples living in this busy world who designate one evening a week as their “date” time, where the bonds of love can grow stronger; where they can converse, relax, and share without distractions.

The patriarch Job understood this facet of God’s nature when He said, speaking of resurrection, “You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands.”²⁵⁷

He desired the work of His hands in Eden, when He created our first parents. That desire for companionship has not diminished with time. And when sin entered His new world, even then He could not let go. He gave His only begotten Son to bring us back into fellowship with Himself. It was for the “joy that was set before Him”²⁵⁸ that Jesus came and suffered and died—the joy of fellowship through eternity with the redeemed beings of His own creation. How could our Creator make clearer to us that He desires our company? Incredibly, this is the reason for it all.

Because it is important to Him, it seems reasonable that it would be important to us as well. But is it, naturally? We tend to put Deity at a great distance; far, far above and beyond us. We send off an occasional prayer to a distant God, not knowing if He heard it or has any interest in us.

For this reason He has given us needs, perhaps our greatest treasures, to act as fulcrums to “catapult” us back into His loving arms where we might have fellowship with Him once more.

He is high and lifted up; coming close to humanity does not diminish Him, it raises us, where His character begins to emerge in the life of the surrendered human. He longs to walk with us, to share with us all that He is in character, and He knows that, regardless of what our perceived needs may be, *our greatest need* is fellowship with Him—to understand Him better, to abide in Him. Therefore, those needs of ours that we have thought were meant to harm us He has allowed for our good.

The abiding, the fellowship, the communion, the “Enoch walk”—these do not result from “gimme” prayers alone. This union with Christ results from learning to speak the language of heaven, which is a language of praise

and appreciation, a creative language, a language of faith, of trusting God; it is most of all a language expressing agreement with His word, which boldly tells us:

"By which [God's divine power, v. 3] have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."²⁵⁹ It is through belief in and exercise of God's powerful promises—His creative word—that we come to abide in Him in wholeness or holiness.

Here is how the saintly Presbyterian minister, Charles Fitch, expressed it: "When I find a promise in the Bible adapted to the necessities of my case, as I am one of Abraham's seed, if I am Christ's, I am one of those to whom that promise was made, and I am an heir to all the good which God in that promise has pledged Himself to bestow. With this assurance I look to the promises and inquire, with eager interest, what has God my Redeemer promised to give me? Here I may look through the whole Bible, for to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, and I am one of them, because I believe in Christ."²⁶⁰

Fitch recognized that God's word in His promises has the same power to create that it did when "He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast,"²⁶¹ and a new world began in the universe.

However, much depends upon *the words* we use in receiving these promises. When God gives us a promise, it's a "done deal." We ask for the gift in the promise. Once requested, we have the assurance, "Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, *and you will have them*."²⁶² Therefore, once requested, we may joyfully praise God and thank Him that we *have* the gift in that promise. Thereafter, every time that need occurs to the mind, we may take that opportunity to thank God that we *have* received it.

Remember, when He says it, it's so, "even if it isn't so," as the child in the story insisted.

An example might be that an individual has a special need for guidance. He or she can lift their voice in praise to God, saying something like, "I thank You and give You praise that You guide me continually and instruct me with Your counsel, with Your own eternal vision. You guide me in the way of peace. I worship You and thank You for guiding me into the truth of this present situation, and that You show me things to come."²⁶³ He or she may include whatever references to the special need that may seem appropriate. Then the individual may rest, knowing that God is in control of the decision and will impress the mind with the best direction for that particular need.

Here those individuals with the most needs may shine. Opportunity upon opportunity occurs throughout the day to lift up the soul to the Master and thank Him for the blessings already received and the wonderful gifts in the promises. Remember, when we have the promise, we have the gift within it; therefore, we may praise God that, Amen, *it is so*. We *have* received. As often as possible we speak the words audibly. Our ears hear. Our heart's door opens. And invisibly to the human eye, we begin gathering to ourselves abundant showers of the Holy Spirit; angels from heaven's throne minister to us, bringing us into a closer fellowship with God than perhaps even they can know.

The Results

Some interesting things begin to occur, as we exercise our minds in this direction. First, it becomes easier and more natural as time passes. We begin to notice the very moment our thoughts or words take a negative direction. *The tape in our head starts to change*. Instead of speaking out of circumstances, we're praising God in our minds, thanking Him for His goodness, thanking Him that we *have* the gifts in the promises. Second, *our circumstances begin to improve*. We more easily see the abundant blessings God has *already* given. Third, we lose our taste for the old way of thinking and speaking.

Praise and thanksgiving become our more natural way. As we become more appreciative of God's goodness, we begin to appreciate others more, and more easily see their positive qualities, whereas before it may have been more natural to see their negative qualities. Communion with God becomes a way of life throughout our days, rather than being confined to scheduled periods of prayer. The living Christ, through the Holy Spirit, becomes almost tangible to us as we begin to walk with Him.

Dora had agonized for two weeks over the plans of her sister Myra, to leave with Jim. What kind of power did he have over her anyway, she wondered. "Has he ever given you a reason to think he has any interest in your well being?" she had asked Myra. She well understood Jim's manipulative talent; if persuasion won't work, he'll drop a load of guilt. Pressure comes in a variety of forms. Every time after one of these "counseling" sessions, Myra had seemed to see the light. But after an hour with Jim, she fell under his spell again.

Jim, in an unguarded moment of begging Dora for Myra's phone number, had blurted out, "I just need to talk to her. I can talk her into anything." His blatant and unapologetic self-absorption convinced Dora that no good would come of the matter for her sister. But they would leave together soon.

Jim had to get back to the east to close a business deal, Myra had agreed to go with him, and Dora had given up.

"Thank You for taking care of Myra," she began to pray each time Myra's needs crossed her mind. Realizing she could do nothing further to influence the situation, she began putting into effect some newly learned principles about how language functions in the life of faith. Although she could make no further efforts to prevent Myra's disastrous plans, she could offer prayers of faith.

"Thank You for taking care of Myra." She had taken her hands off the situation and put it into God's hands. Now God could do the "worrying."

Monday morning arrived—the day of the scheduled departure. The car was packed. Jim and Myra would drive her car across the country to resolve his business deal.

"Thank You for taking care of Myra," Dora prayed.

Before leaving town, Jim made a final phone call east to check on the status of the business he would take care of after a few days of driving.

"You need to get here by tonight. Otherwise, this project is history," said the voice on the other end of the phone.

They raced to the airport and purchased a ticket for Jim to fly east in order to prevent the project's "going south." Myra would drive there alone.

But with Jim gone, she looked at the situation more objectively. She clearly saw his lack of interest in her needs and feelings and the folly of trying to change him. With Jim's influence out of the way, she saw that God did not intend for her to follow him. Had it not been for a change of circumstances over which neither had any control, they both shudder to think what could have happened.

The language of faith is the language of praise. Notice in the illustration that Dora received God's answer *before* it appeared in the visible world. She expressed appreciation prior to receiving, because she had claimed God's promise and, beyond that, there is nothing left for the human to do but rejoice that, Amen, *it is so*. God honored Dora's expressions of confidence in Him by doing that which He had promised to do. If the two of them had left together, Dora would still have peace in her heart, knowing that she had turned the case over to God, and whatever the outcome, she would know it was right in His sight.

I do not know what specific promise Dora claimed, but innumerable ones appear in the sacred text, covering all aspects of human need. Many are general, all-purpose promises for extraordinary occasions that don't fall into a common category, and no doubt Dora claimed one of these. Taking her hands off the situation, she rested, assured that God had the case, and He

could and would bring to pass the very best outcome in answer to her prayer of faith.

To recap the faith experience:

Our Need

God wants fellowship with us, even in our fallen condition. We have access to His righteousness *only* through this experience—while we abide *in Him*. But we cannot generate this experience without a *need* strong enough to *motivate* us. An outstanding characteristic of pitiful Laodicea is that she feels no need.²⁶⁴ If we would walk with God as did Enoch, Noah, Moses, and the great patriarchs and prophets of old, we must identify a need that will bring us to Him for resolution—not once but constantly until the habit is fixed.

Our Helplessness

Although faith entails a constant walk with God, the best exercise for it involves a need we cannot meet in our human condition. Whether our need is a sin that constantly overcomes us or a circumstance we cannot change, we know we have no power over it in our own strength. Just as Jehoshaphat confessed to God ancient Israel's helplessness before the invading armies, for Him to work we must confess our helplessness before *our* needs.

God's Word

For each of these needs God has made commitments to us in the pages of holy writ. He invites us to find those promises; re-word them to mean ourselves, and put them into our deepest mind and heart, as we praise God for them.

Praise

As we apply His word to our needs in expressions of praise, our Lord comes in from the periphery and shadows of our lives and becomes almost palpable in our day-ro-day experience. "You are holy, who *inhabit* the praises of Israel."²⁶⁵

Rest

When we've done all we can humanly do to meet our and others' needs, we *rest* in God's promises that He'll rake over where we have no power. Rest implies trust in God, and the Sabbath is its supreme symbol. This time of spiritual rest is a time of special oneness with our heavenly Father through praise-oriented communion—the language of heaven.

Union With Christ

The goal of the language of heaven—the new way of thinking, speaking, and living—as set out in this small work, is that Christ might dwell in *our hearts* by faith. Is the heart the nonconscious? And if so, is the nonconscious the initial place of Christ's dwelling within the human? We may have to wait until eternity to have these questions answered. But because the nonconscious is an aspect of mind, it surely must play a part in the overall picture. I like to think of the nonconscious as the primary place of connection, the locale where the human first plays host to the divine Spirit, as He comes in and fills our entire being.²⁶⁶

The ancient rite of circumcision,²⁶⁷ though not practiced in Christendom, can yet teach us eternal truth through study of its symbolic meaning. God gave so many of these object lessons to Israel. He ever intended them for study in order that humans might be led to walk with Him. Instead, our fallen human nature has sought salvation merit in *observing* the object lessons. But it was ever God's intent that we seek the meaning behind the ritual. How does it instruct us? How does it "bring us to Christ?"²⁶⁸ What does it teach us about walking with God? Primarily by teaching us the offensiveness of sin—the great separator between God and humanity.

As circumcision of the flesh expunges a risk of infection at the point of contact in the intimate marriage relationship, so a circumcised "heart" expunges sin from the point of contact in the spiritual relationship between the human and the divine. If "the heart" is the totality of mind at all its levels, then to "circumcise the heart"—the *new covenant* aspect of circumcision admonished in Scripture—must mean to banish sin from the mind's precincts at all levels. And the only way to accomplish this is to "let in" the Holy Spirit to the human heart and mind. The Holy Spirit displaces sin. A heart in which the Holy Spirit resides and governs is a "circumcised" heart. It is a heart on which is written the principles of the divine law, because that law has its origin in the character of God, and the Holy Spirit is God. This completes the gospel goal, the at-one-ment, the marriage between God and the human, the dominant Scriptural theme.

Further, the True Witness of Revelation refers to this invisible reality in His counsel to proud Laodicea. "Behold," He says, "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."²⁶⁹ This transaction, unseen by human eyes, manifests in the changed life and character of the human. And it is clearly Laodicea's only hope.

Scripture abounds in symbol after symbol and story upon story, illustrating this saving truth—that God wants union with His fallen children. It is a connection we must have, if we would be saved.

In Him

Some have expressed discomfort with the idea of eternal God the Holy Spirit's dwelling *in* them. They accept the Spirit's presence *with* them, but *in* them? Perhaps that's going too far, they say. In one case they urge this idea as too much like "demon possession," where demons reside *in* the human. They do not want to lose their free will, which they assume will occur if God dwells *in* them, as it does when demons dwell *in* them.

However, there is a vast difference in these two things. True, demon possession is most likely the enemy's counterfeit of God's program. His counterfeits are *designed* to confuse the mind; therefore, such concerns are understandable.

But in the case of "Christ in you, the hope of glory,"²⁷⁰ the Being dwelling within is absolute love, absolute purity, absolute goodness, absolutely *for* our best *eternal* interests, and humans *never* lose free will in this arrangement. They can *choose* to abandon the indwelling arrangement anytime they wish. (But who would want to?)

Not so when it comes to demon possession. In this instance the being dwelling within is there to *destroy* the human host, and the human loses free will to the place where he or she can only reclaim it through the warfare prayers of God's committed, connected, faithful servants. The similarity in these two arrangements exists on the surface only.

The other objection sees in the theme, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" a similarity to another of the enemy's counterfeits—pantheism. Humans who fail to understand the difference between these two concepts can derail their eternal prospects over it. Here, it has been said, the track of truth lies close beside the track of error. Both tracks seem to be the same for awhile, but looking down the way one can see they diverge and speed in opposite directions.

As has been stated, pantheism says humans have a spark of divinity that can be fanned into "godness." Much contemporary religious thought teaches this, the devil's lie. Scripture clearly says that humans are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked and, what's more, they don't know it.²⁷¹ It teaches the depravity of human nature, that only God can address humanity's helplessness.

"Christ in you, the hope of glory" requires a separate Being to come into the human. Until eternity the human never changes his or her basic nature.

All they can do is surrender and ask—indeed plead—that the blessed Visitor will “come in His sweetness; come in His goodness” and “plant [His] own image deep on” their “heart.”

Many of the familiar songs of Zion recognize this connected experience:

“Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way!

Hold o’er my being absolute sway.

Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see

Christ only, always, living in me.”

“Live out Thy life within me,

O Jesus, King of kings!

Be Thou Thyself the answer

To all my questionings;

Live out Thy life within me;

In all things have Thy way!

I, the transparent medium

Thy glory to display.”

“There’s a Savior at the door.

Let Him in; let Him in.

He has been there oft before.

Let Him in; Let Him in.

He will save you from your sin,

Give you peace and joy within,

And He’s knocking now again.

Let Him in.”

Lucifer doesn’t counterfeit God’s program just to fritter away time until his final demise. No. He always has a reason for it, and that reason is to ensnare you and me to our eternal loss. He invented pantheism for just that purpose—to confuse humans and take them with him to destruction. Whether he lures them into accepting the false, or causes them to turn from the true for fear of embracing the false—it’s all the same to him. The results

are the same—eternally ruined humans. Be assured, it is absolutely vital to your eternal interests to know the difference.

The gospel can only work through this arrangement. Jesus came and became me (and you). He lived a perfect life in our flesh through the indwelling Spirit. Now, in order to meet the legal requirements to save us, He must again live in us by the Spirit. He took our sinful human life with Him to the cross, and there it eternally died. Now He brings the eternal existence inherent in Himself into our surrendered being.

Can you see the intimate connection necessary throughout this plan, from beginning to end. Its success turns upon our willingness to understand and enter into this arrangement.

A Personal God

For most of my life as a Christian I believed in a personal God. Indeed, I could dispute with any deist on the point. But in practice I did not believe it. I did not see myself as special enough that God would care about all my moments. What sport I was of the enemy, believing as I did that God would only help me in the unlikely event I got into trouble helping myself. And I got into *so* much trouble helping myself.

It's different now, perhaps because my views have changed. The connection with Christ is now my priority. Yes, I still have problems, but I see them differently now. Now they are "lab opportunities," the workshop of God, training me to trust Him no matter what.

Biblical Symbols

Our Father speaks to us in symbols. I find this a fascinating aspect of His character. The great prophecies of the earth's last days reside hidden in symbols—those of Daniel and Revelation and Ezekiel and the minor prophets. And the same God of the Bible and of its symbolic prophecies speaks to us during our sleeping hours through symbolic dreams.

Ever wonder what keeps us alive during sleep, when the conscious mind retires for the night? It's the autonomic nervous system, which controls our breathing, cellular activity, heart function—and the nonconscious out of which comes our dream life.²⁷² The same God who gave us the symbolic prophecies, built into our own being the ability to work out daily problems through symbolic dreaming in the night.

Scripture, in fact, is so symbolic that symbols sometimes refer to other symbols,²⁷³ all designed to help us understand something *about* the "basic unit" of the life of faith—walking with God. That's where it is and what it's all about. Abraham was called the friend of God, because he had this faith

experience. But our dullness must make communicating these truths to us very challenging for God. When He wants us to understand something, too often a perfect illustration in earth's ways simply does not exist. It may be somewhat like playing charades with persons from a dramatically different culture from one's own. Therefore, we must study those symbols and analogies presented in His word with the thought in mind that in them God is powerfully exerting Himself to make us understand matters of eternal importance to us.

Essential Oil

In the parable of the ten virgins²⁷⁴ Christ taught the necessity of "oil" in the "lamp" of all who anticipate an eternal home in His kingdom. "Oil" in the sanctuary services kept the flames burning in the lampstand of the Holy Place. Middle Eastern oil usually meant olive oil. It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of this product to the culture at that time. Besides food use, it lit homes, provided a trade commodity; it provided the base for medicinals, soaps and had numerous other applications in society. "Oil" as a symbol is generally agreed to mean the Holy Spirit, but why? In what respect(s) does "oil" serve as a good reminder of the Holy Spirit?

Throughout history progressive societies have run on oil of one kind or another. At the time of the writing of sacred Scriptures, olive oil held that role.²⁷⁵ The "oil" permeated the culture and gave it life. Thus, in a spiritual sense, the Holy Spirit brings life to the world, when He occupies His rightful place in human hearts. He brings the life Christ purchased for you and me on Calvary into the life of humans, who, without that experience, are "dead in trespasses and sins."²⁷⁶ Without the work of the Holy Spirit in human hearts, Christ's sacrifice on the cross would have been in vain. All the institutions and elements of society depend upon the presence of the Holy Spirit to maintain life, order, and harmony.

The lampstand of the sanctuary and the parable of the ten virgins taught that the element that gave the lamps *life* was the oil.

Essential Rain

Rain is another Biblical symbol for the Holy Spirit. But why? How does "rain" suggest the Holy Spirit?

Scripture says the Lord will come to us like rain,²⁷⁷ that we must ask for rain in the time of the latter rain.²⁷⁸

It says God "rains" righteousness upon us. "Rain down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness." "It is time to seek the Lord, till He comes and rains righteousness on you."²⁷⁹ We never imagined

it coming in that way, did we? We thought we were to rev ourselves up to a condition of righteousness, thought ourselves failures when we couldn't do it—but no. Righteousness doesn't come that way. God *rains it* in the Person of the Holy Spirit into our deepest heart and mind.

If you have a King James Bible, check out the marginal references for the following quotation: “Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for He has given you the former rain [“a teacher of righteousness”] [“according to (true) righteousness”] faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you—the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.”²⁸⁰ I suspect this text has a great deal more to teach us than what lies on the surface—or even the surface and the marginal reference. But “rain” appears to be the true teaching of righteousness in the symbolic, Biblical sense.

Let us for a moment examine the Biblical definition of “righteousness.” The psalmist calls it conformity to God’s holy law. “All Your commandments are righteousness.”²⁸¹ Isaiah agrees. “Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, you people in whose heart is My law.”²⁸² This law God writes in the hearts of His surrendered children.²⁸³

Jeremiah provides an additional facet of the definition. “Now *this* is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”²⁸⁴ Jeremiah even repeats this important statement in 33:16. Therefore, if the Lord is our righteousness and the law is righteousness, it follows that the origin of God’s law is Himself—His own character.

That being the case, how is He going to “rain” His righteousness on us?

Jesus clarifies this in the gospel of John, where He provides the crowning argument that God the Holy Spirit dwells within surrendered humans. He knew He would soon leave His disciples, and He sought the thing most needful for them at that time.

“I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you *and will be in you*. I will not leave you orphans; *I will come to you*. . . . If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and *We will come to him and make Our home with him*.”²⁸⁵ The closeness between the divine Beings means that when the Holy Spirit comes to humans, it is as if Father and Son come also. Thus, when the Holy Spirit lives in the surrendered human life, there the righteousness of heaven reigns. God’s law is written on the heart.

“Rain down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness.” “It is time to seek the Lord, till He comes and rains

righteousness on you,"²⁸⁶ the righteousness of the Holy Spirit, as we learn to abide in Him.

But is it real? If our eyes could be opened, could we see Him? Can we develop a constant abiding connection with Him? The Biblical symbols express meaning—a meaning that connects with and reflects genuine reality.

Essential Garments

Jesus told the story of a king who gave a wedding banquet, but those he invited as guests kept making excuses to miss it. Finally, by inviting anyone and everyone, he accumulated enough guests to hold his banquet.

But one guest came in common clothing, while the king had provided wedding garments for every guest. "Why didn't you wear the garments I gave you?" he asked the guest. The man offered no excuse. At the king's direction he was cast into "outer darkness," symbolic of the loss of his soul.

The "wedding banquet" obviously symbolizes the wedding supper of the Lamb.²⁸⁷ Inviting anyone and everyone who would come represents the gospel's availability to "whosoever will" receive it. But what does the garment represent?

This symbol appears throughout Scripture in various forms. Adam and Eve, for example, didn't know they were naked until they ate the forbidden fruit.²⁸⁸ Did they suddenly notice their nakedness, or did they suddenly *become* naked?

Job 29:14 says, "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me." Did our first parents lose this garment of righteousness when they sinned? If so, what did they lose? What went away that they could term "righteousness?" Was it visible to their eyes?

Isaiah also speaks of righteousness as a garment. "He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness."²⁸⁹ Just what *is* that covering? "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and *that cover with a covering*, but not of *my spirit*."²⁹⁰ He writes to sinners who covered themselves with something other than God. But, conversely, He longs to cover us with a covering that *is* wholly of Himself—His Spirit. Is that what Malcolm saw as our story began? A representation of that ever-flowing water of life, of that transparent robe woven in the loom of heaven?

The apostle Paul offers another symbol of essential garments, reminding us of the power available in this clothing. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. . . . Take up the whole armor of God . . . stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the

breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."²⁹¹

Each of these articles symbolizes Jesus. He is the truth;²⁹² He is our righteousness;²⁹³ He is our peace;²⁹⁴ He is our salvation;²⁹⁵ He is our shield.²⁹⁶ Even the faith is "the faith of Jesus,"²⁹⁷ or Jesus living out His faith in the believer through the cooperative exercise of human will.

Jesus comes to us in the form of the Holy Spirit, whom He asks us to receive as Himself.²⁹⁸

Why would inspiration depict the presence of the Holy Spirit as *a garment*? Characteristically, a garment clothes the person. Is it possible this is what the Holy Spirit does in our lives? If our eyes could be opened, could we see Him?

A Change of Raiment

During the Jewish repatriation to Judah following the seventy years' Babylonian captivity, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet with a timeless message as important to us today as when he delivered it to ancient Israel.

On rare occasions Scripture draws aside the curtain between the visible and invisible worlds to reveal events transpiring beyond human vision that, once seen and understood, enhance in a special way the human's ability to cooperate with the plans of God. This is one such occasion.

Zechariah 3:1-7 describes interaction between beings in the visible and invisible world. Joshua the high priest represents the human race—persons, individuals, and people. Besides Joshua, the Angel of the Lord and Satan are there in their usual roles. Satan "opposes" or accuses Joshua (the human race) of his/their sins. He who entrapped them now denounces them for their failures. The Lord (or the Angel of the Lord) defends this admitted sinner, rebukes Satan, and, notice; commands that his clothing be changed.

Joshua's filthy garments—his iniquity—vanish; "rich robes" and a "clean turban" are placed upon Him. The Angel of the Lord now charges him:

"If you will *walk in My ways*, and if you will *keep My command*, then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here [angels]."²⁹⁹

Here again Scripture carries forward its symbol that iniquity is like "filthy garments" in some way, and righteousness is like "rich robes" and a "clean turban." These similes only work if they represent something real. Joshua represented the entire fallen human race. Since Scripture so often compares

righteousness to a robe and since Christ is our righteousness, perhaps it follows that the Holy Spirit (representing Christ) comes to us in a way that is as real as a robe flowing over us—a robe that does not cloak sin.

Zechariah 3:9 and 4:10 speak of eyes. Revelation 5:6 defines the eyes as “the seven Spirits of God.” The entirety of Zechariah 4 makes clear it is about the Holy Spirit and how He reaches the people of earth. These metaphors are not arbitrary; they somehow *meaningfully stand for* their intended reality.

Divinity and Humanity

A number of years ago a school held a track meet as its educational year came to a close. The humble co-ed three-legged race, as it commenced, gave no clue of anything special to come. Boys strapped one of their legs to one of the legs of a girl, and the teams hobbled up to the starting line. The gun went off. Most of the couples, their legs an uneven length, dropped immediately to the grass, falling on top of each other, getting in each others' way and struggling unsuccessfully to get up, while the spectators roared with laughter.

But one couple shot from the starting line at the sound of the gun and raced straight to the finish line without a hitch. How did they do it?

The girl picked up her feet and let the boy do the running. He carried her across the line.

Perhaps this story requires no comment. As long as we struggle to put sin away, we cannot be successful. Righteousness does not come that way. It is when we surrender and come into union with Christ through the Holy Spirit, as we learn to walk with Him, that He changes our character to blend with His own. The effort goes not so much into overcoming sin, as much as it goes into learning to abide “in Him.” It is His presence in human lives that brings victory.

Many examples can be cited that illustrate it. Messiah combined His divinity with our humanity in order to save us. Scripture itself blends the inspiration of the divine Holy Spirit with the work of human prophets to educate us on the mind of heaven. In God's providence it takes both to bring us our Bible.

The burning bush also shows the presence of divinity—the fire—combined with the human—the lowly bush. God used this symbol of His *ultimate goal* for Israel and for all humanity in calling Moses to leadership of His people, in bringing them forth from Egyptian bondage.

But did the people understand this plan? Was it explained to them? God instructed them to build Him a sanctuary that He might “dwell among them.”³⁰⁰ He says, “I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall

be My people.”³⁰¹ But was walking “among” them the same as walking “in” them?

The apostle Paul says it was. He quotes this statement of Moses in these words: “I will dwell *in* them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”³⁰² The presence of the glory of God within the very heart of the wilderness tabernacle further illustrated this truth to this ancient people. It illustrated the gospel’s eternal purpose. The kingdom of God is, first, within the human before the human lives within God’s heavenly kingdom.

For us, righteousness takes two; the human and the divine. It is the blending of these two beings that enables humans to meet the character standards of the judgment. Only when God sees the Holy Spirit, representing Christ, residing in the human is that person considered eligible for heaven. The salvation merit is inherent in the divine companion, not in the human. An understanding exercise of heavenly language facilitates that union. “By which have been given to us exceedingly *great and precious promises*, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”³⁰³ Where the Holy Spirit reigns, the works of righteousness flower. Thus judgment can look at human works and deduce those in union with the Holy Spirit.

Again, do not mistake this for pantheism, which says humans contain a spark of Deity, which they can fan into a flame, revving themselves up to a condition of divinity. This is nonsense. Scripture teaches nothing more clearly than the depraved nature of humanity. In and of ourselves we have no potential for righteousness. That quality belongs to God alone. Adam and Eve possessed it before the fall; since that time their hopelessly fallen nature has cursed their posterity. Do not fall for the innumerable contemporary heresies that suggest humans can “build themselves up” to divinity.

Righteousness by faith entails coming along side of, connecting with, unifying with God through the Holy Spirit. It means walking with God, as did Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses—all the great patriarchs of old. It means partaking of, taking up, the character of our heavenly Companion. “Whatever is not from faith [this experience] is sin.”³⁰⁴ Heavenly fellowship imparts to the fallen the grace to do what’s right, regardless of circumstances or appearances, and to leave for God to deal with what’s left.

Faith thinks differently from the carnal, unconverted mind. All of life outside the faith experience is sin, leading the apostle Paul to say we are “by nature children of wrath”³⁰⁵ with all the grim ramifications inherent in that concept. It’s about what we do, yes, but far more, it’s about who we are. And perhaps even more, it’s about where we are—in Him or out of Him. An

omnipotent Power works beyond the veil of visibility in concert with the children of faith. The cross of Christ made it possible. Now human words of praise and appreciation to our heavenly Father form the bonds that connect the human with the divine, earth with heaven, and make this connection effectual.

"Above and around me all was light and gladness, and praise to the name of my Redeemer seemed the language of every breath. I cannot but feel that, in that state of mind, sin had no dominion over me," said the saintly Fitch. In Christ he was perfect—in *His perfection*.³⁰⁶

Shame on us for allowing the enemy to steal this wisdom from us.

Victors In the Final Crisis

God's elect who one day stand on eternal Zion's shore will look back and understand how triumph finally came: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and *by the word of their testimony*, and they did not love their lives to the death."³⁰⁷ We have long known that the blood of the Lamb—Christ's death on Calvary—paid the sin price for us. Without diminishing its importance in *any* degree, is it not time to get our word-making apparatus going in the right direction? Words express the human mind. But we have not understood how profoundly words *shape* the human mind. Is it not time for us to stop calling God a liar by doubting His word, by suggesting that He cannot do for us what His word says He *can and will* do for us? If we train our voice to express agreement with Him in praise and thanksgiving, we may be astonished at what He will do for us in return.

God's Promise of Perfection

"Therefore, you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." "If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body."³⁰⁸

The perfection God demands I cannot generate. I am and will ever be wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked—and worst of all—I cannot see the depth of it. He is ever holy, righteous, wise; with all the qualities of character for which my heart longs. The only righteousness available to me in the universe is His. But I cannot have His righteous character unless I have Him—His mind³⁰⁹ and all the rest living in me by the Holy Spirit. "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have *put on Christ*."³¹⁰

Just as humans cannot sever their character from themselves and send it forth, neither can God. We can only have His righteousness by hosting Him within us—as a vessel or building—both Scriptural symbols for this experience.

The Simplicity of the Gospel

“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and *to walk humbly with your God?*”³¹¹ After all this—after all the ritual and illustrations God has given to try to teach us the gospel, it all boils down to the experience of Abraham, who “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”³¹² May God help *us* believe Him, too.

“Though the fig tree may not blossom,

Nor fruit be on the vines;

Though the labor of the olive may fail,

And the fields yield no food;

Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,

And there be no herd in the stalls -

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,

I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

Habakkuk. 3:17, 18

APPENDIX A

In Him

Here is a list of Biblical texts, saying that God desires to dwell with/in humans. But is it literal or just a figure of speech? See how many more of these texts you can find in your Bible reading:

The Lord is the refuge of the poor (Psalm 14:6).

Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings (Psalm 17:8).

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My *shield* and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold (Psalm 18:2. See also verses 30 and 35).

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms (Deuteronomy 33:27).

In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion. In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me (Psalm 27:5).

You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues (Psalm 31:20).

The Lord is my strength and my shield. My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him (Psalm 28:7).

You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah (Psalm 32:7).

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble... The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah (Psalm 46:1, 11).

In the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge (Psalm 57:1).

You have been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. Selah (Psalm 61:3, 4).

God is a refuge for us. Selah (Psalm 62:8).

In the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice (Psalm 63:7).

They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones (Psalm 83:3).

For our shield belongs to the Lord, and our king to the Holy One of Israel (Psalm 89:18. Or, "Of Jehovah is our shield, and of the Holy One of Israel our king"—*Young's Literal Translation*).

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations (Psalm 90:1).

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.' He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge... Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling (Psalm 91:1,2,4,9,10).

But the Lord has been my defense, and my God the rock of my refuge (Psalm 94:22).

He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those who condemn him (Psalm 109:31).

You are my hiding place and my shield (Psalm 119:114).

The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night (Psalm 121:5).

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people (Psalm 125:2).

You have hedged me behind and before (Psalm 139:5).

My eyes are upon You, O God the Lord; in You I take refuge (Psalm 141:8).

Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies; In You I take shelter (Psalm 143:9).

Blessed be the Lord my Rock ... my loving kindness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield and the One in whom I take refuge (Psalm 144:1,2).

[God] is a shield to those who put their trust in Him (Psalm 30:5).

Your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard (Isaiah 58:8).

You, O Lord, are in our midst, and we are called by Your name; do not leave us! (Jeremiah 14:9).

I will hedge up your way with thorns, and wall her in, so that she cannot find her paths (Hosea 2:6).

The Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel (Joel 3:16).

The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble (Nahum 1:7).

"I," says the Lord, "will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst... I will dwell in your midst," says the Lord... "I will dwell in your midst" (Zechariah 2:5,10,11).

I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem (Zechariah 8:3).

APPENDIX B

Bible Promises That Meet Your Needs

“All the promises of God,
in Him [Christ] are Yes,
and in Him Amen, to the glory of
God through us” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

“He who does not believe
God has made Him a liar”
(1 John 5:10).

For Purity of Heart

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:11).

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Now thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it (1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24).

For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Whoever abides in Him does not sin (1 John 3:6).

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24).

For Forgiveness

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12).

"Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you" (Isaiah 44:22).

He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You [God] will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19).

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

For Salvation and Blessing of Children

I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lends; and his descendants are blessed (Psalm 37:25, 26).

He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy (Psalm 72:4).

[T]he posterity of the righteous will be delivered (Proverbs 11:21).

In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge (Proverbs 14:26).

The righteous man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him (Proverbs 20:7).

For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring (Isaiah 44:3).

Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible be delivered; for I will contend with him who contends with you, and I will save your children (Isaiah 49:25).

All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace¹¹³ of your children (Isaiah 54:13).

Then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them (Jeremiah 32:39).

For Guidance

The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way (Psalm 25:9).

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye (Psalm 32:8).

Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4).

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way (Psalm 37:23).

For this is our God, our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to death (Psalm 48:14).

You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory (Psalm 73:24).

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths (Proverbs 3:6).

I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, and not forsake them (Isaiah 42:16).

The Lord will guide you continually (Isaiah 58:11).

When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth (John 16:13).

For Protection

The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him, who shelters him all the day long; and he shall dwell between His shoulders (Deuteronomy 33:12)

I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety (Psalm 4:8).

I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved (Psalm 16:8).

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust." ... He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler... No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling (Psalm 91:1, 2, 4,10).

He will not be afraid of evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord (Psalm 112:7).

When you lie down, you will not be afraid; yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet (Proverbs 3:24).

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe (Proverbs 18:10).

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you (Isaiah 43:2).

Fear not, for I am with you (Isaiah 43:5).

For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard (Isaiah 52:12).

No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn (Isaiah 54:17).

I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods... And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid (Ezekiel 34:25, 28).

And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? (1 Peter 3:13).

For Health and Healing

If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord who heals you (Exodus 15:26).

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your iniquities, *Who heals all your diseases*; Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things. So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's (Psalm 103:1-5).

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people (Matthew 9:35).

And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover (Mark 16:17, 18).

And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all (Luke 6:19).

Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sin, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed (1 Peter 2:24. See also Isaiah 53:5.).

For Financial Need

Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God. Blessed shall you be in the city and blessed shall you be in the country; blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out (Deuteronomy 28:1-6) (Read the entire chapter.)

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success (Joshua 1:8).

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessings that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," says the Lord of hosts, "And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land, says the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 3:10-12).

Therefore, do not worry, saying What shall we eat? Or What shall we drink? Or What shall we wear? For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:31-33).

Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you (Luke 6:38).

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers (3 John 2).

For Courage

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God (Psalm 43:5).

The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe (Proverbs 29:25).

You [the Lord] will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You (Isaiah 26:3).

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10).

For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you' (Isaiah 41:13).

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will

come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also (John 14:1-3).

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:31,32).

So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:6).

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).

[C]asting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7).

For General Needs

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all (Psalm 34:19).

He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him (Psalm 91:15).

The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will bear their cry and save them (Psalm 145:18,19).

It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear (Isaiah 65:24).

Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened (Matthew 7:7, 8).

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them (Matthew 18:19, 20).

And all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive (Matthew 21:22).

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them (Mark 11:24).

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it (John 14:13).

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you (John 15:7).

And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you (John 16:23).

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Timothy 4:16).

And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight (1 John 3:22).

APPENDIX C

“Speaking” In the Book of Proverbs

Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you (4:24).
(listening) I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors. Now I am at the point of utter ruin in the public assembly (5:13,14).

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence (10:11).

Lying lips conceal hatred, and whoever utters slander is a fool (10:18).

When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but the prudent are restrained in speech (10:19).

The tongue of the righteous is choice silver (10:20).

The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off (10:31).

The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked what is perverse (10:32).

By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked (11:11).

Whoever belittles another lacks sense, but an intelligent person remains silent (11:12).

A gossip goes about telling secrets, but one who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a confidence (11:13).

The words of the wicked are a deadly ambush, but the speech of the upright delivers them (12:6).

A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth (12:14)

(listening) The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise (12:15).

He who speaks truth declares righteousness, but a false witness, deceit (12:17).

There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health (12:18).

The truthful lip shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment (12:19).

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight (12:22).

A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth (13:2).

He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction (13:3).

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger (15:1).
[Note: *Research has confirmed this principle. When in confrontational situations, lowering the voice requires the opposition to listen more closely and thus his/her voice automatically lowers as well.*]

The tongue of the wise dispenses knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly (15:2).

The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the heart of the fool does not do so (15:7).

[T]he mouth of fools feeds on foolishness (15:14)

To make an apt answer is a joy to anyone, and a word in season, how good it is! (15:23).

Evil plans are an abomination to the Lord, but gracious words are pure. (15:26).

The mind of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil (15:28).

A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit (15:4).

The mind of the one who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly (15:14).

The wise in heart will be called prudent, and sweetness of the lips increases learning (16:21).

The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips (16:23).

Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones (16:24).

He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker; he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished (17:5).

Excellent speech is not becoming to a fool, much less lying lips to a prince (17:7).

He who has a deceitful heart finds no good, and he who has a perverse tongue falls into evil (17:20).

One who spares words is knowledgeable; one who is cool in spirit has understanding (17:27).

Even fools who keep silent are considered wise; when they close their lips, they are deemed intelligent (17:28).

A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing personal opinion (18:2).

The words of the mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a gushing stream (18:4).

A fool's lips bring strife, and a fool's mouth invites a flogging (18:6).

The mouths of fools are their ruin, and their lips a snare to themselves (18:7).

The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body (18:8).

He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him (18:13).

From the fruit of the mouth one's stomach is satisfied; the yield of the lips brings satisfaction (18:20).

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits (18:21).

(listening) Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days (19:20).

(listening) The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both (20:12).

There is gold and a multitude of rubies, but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel (20:15).

To watch over mouth and tongue is to keep out of trouble (21:23).

My soul will rejoice when your lips speak what is right (23:16).

Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, and do not deceive with your lips (24:28).

Do not say, "I will do to others as they have done to me; I will pay them back for what they have done." (24:29).

It is the glory of God to conceal things (25:2).

Argue your case with your neighbor directly, and do not disclose another's secret (25:9).

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver (25:11).

With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue can break bones (25:15).

Like a war club, a sword, or a sharp arrow is one who bears false witness against a neighbor (25:18).

The north wind brings forth rain, and a backbiting tongue an angry countenance (25:23).

Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him (26:4).

Like the legs of the lame that hang limp is a proverb in the mouth of fools (26:7).

Like a thorn that goes into the hand of a drunkard is a proverb in the mouth of fools (26:9).

Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases (26:20).

As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife (26:21).

The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body (26:22).

Fervent lips with a wicked heart are like earthenware covered with silver dross (26:23).

A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin (26:28).

Let another praise you, and not your own mouth, a stranger, and not your own lips (27:2).

An enemy dissembles in speaking while harboring deceit within (26:24).

When an enemy speaks graciously, do not believe it (26:25).

Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him (29:20).

Every word of God proves true; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him (30:5).

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ENDNOTES

¹ Emphasis supplied unless otherwise stated. Some of the names connected with illustrations have been changed.

² Luke 10:19, KJV.

³ Romans 1:16.

⁴ "Introduction." *The Weight of Glory* by C. S. Lewis, (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1980), p. 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁶ James 1:17; Matthew 5:45; Acts 17:27.

⁷ Jeremiah 29:11.

⁸ Genesis 1:26.

⁹ In fact, it was in the setting of granting the new race of humans dominion over the animals that God stated He made humans like Himself (See Genesis 1:26).

¹⁰ Matthew 5:48.

¹¹ James 3:2.

¹² 1 Corinthians 3:1.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 6:19.

¹⁴ Matthew 23:15.

¹⁵ 2 Peter 1:4.

¹⁶ Hebrews 6:1.

¹⁷ Per *Young's Literal Translation*, sans supplied words, God actually said: "I a shield to thee, thy reward exceeding great." This has been translated several different

ways; however, the *New King James* rendering stated above is a valid representation of the original.

¹⁸ Micah 6:8; Isaiah 57:15.

¹⁹ 2 Samuel 22:31.

²⁰ Hebrews 11:5.

²¹ Genesis 6:9; James 2:23.

²² Numbers 12:3; Hebrews 11:27.

²³ Psalm 16:2 8; 25:15.

²⁴ Luke 2:25.

²⁵ Revelation 22.16.

²⁶ John 8:26-29; 10:25, 30, 38; 13:20; 15:23.

²⁷ John 8:16.

²⁸ Mark 15:34.

²⁹ John.6:56, 63.

³⁰ John 15:5,6; Galatians 5:22.

³¹ John 15:5.

³² John 14:16-18.

³³ Gal. 3:27; Col 2:6.

³⁴ 2 Corinthians 13:3.

³⁵ Phil. 3:9.

³⁶ As an exercise, begin noticing how often the apostle Paul mentions "in Him" or similar in his writings.

³⁷ Ephesians 3:16, 17.

³⁸ Romans 1:16.

³⁹ John 17:20-23.

⁴⁰ 1 John 2:27.

⁴¹ 1 John 2:27: 3:6.

⁴² 1 John 3:24.

⁴³ 1 John 3:24; 4:16.

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- ⁴⁴ 1 Thessalonians 1:8; Romans 10:18.
- ⁴⁵ Luke 1:15; 2:25.
- ⁴⁶ Acts 2:2-4.
- ⁴⁷ Acts 2:41.
- ⁴⁸ Acts 10:19; 11:12.
- ⁴⁹ Acts 11:28.
- ⁵⁰ Acts 16:7.
- ⁵¹ Joel 2:28-31.
- ⁵² Acts 1:14; 2:1.
- ⁵³ Daniel 12:10.
- ⁵⁴ Romans 10:6-10; Deuteronomy 30:11-14.
- ⁵⁵ Col. 1:27.
- ⁵⁶ Revelation 3:14-22.
- ⁵⁷ 2 Peter 1:4.
- ⁵⁸ 2 Corinthians 7:1.
- ⁵⁹ Amos 3:3.
- ⁶⁰ Malachi 3:6; Timothy 13:8.
- ⁶¹ Genesis 3:15.
- ⁶² Genesis 12: 2, 3; 13:14-16; 15:1-7; 17:7-11.
- ⁶³ Genesis 26:24.
- ⁶⁴ Genesis 28:12-17.
- ⁶⁵ Romans 4:16.
- ⁶⁶ Matthew 5:3.
- ⁶⁷ Exodus. 15:26; 23:25; Isaiah 58:8; 53:5.
- ⁶⁸ Philippians 4:19.
- ⁶⁹ John 14:13,14.
- ⁷⁰ 1 John 3:22.
- ⁷¹ 1 Timothy 1:15; Romans 5:8.
- ⁷² 1 Thessalonians 5:24.

⁷³ John 6:29.

⁷⁴ Revelation 20:12.

⁷⁵ John 14:15.

⁷⁶ Nahum 1:9.

⁷⁷ Romans 7:12.

⁷⁸ Ephesians 3:20.

⁷⁹ 2 Corinthians 12:9.

⁸⁰ Romans 8:28. We are all called. See Romans 10:12 and Mark 8:34.

⁸¹ Psalm 37:4.

⁸² Hebrews 11:6.

⁸³ Galatians 5:22.

⁸⁴ 2 Peter 1:4.

⁸⁵ Romans 6:16; 2 Peter 2:9.

⁸⁶ Luke 10:18; Isaiah 14:12,16,17.

⁸⁷ (Great Britain: Profile Books Ltd, 2002), p. 127.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 12,13,163.

⁸⁹ Reported by Larry L. Jacoby, D. Stephen Lindsay, and Jeffrey P. Toth, McMaster University, Hamilton Ontario, Canada, in "Unconscious Influences Revealed." *American Psychologist*, June 1992, p. 804. Also Tallis, p. 169.

⁹⁰ Tallis, pp. 95-6.

⁹¹ p. x.

⁹² Tallis, p.167.

⁹³ Robert Gerzon, *Finding Serenity In the Age of Anxiety*, (New York: Macmillan), p. 97.

⁹⁴ Tallis, p. ix.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. x.

⁹⁶ Tallis, pp. 1-7, 60.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

⁹⁸ Proverbs 20:27. (OT#990, Strong) *beten* (*beh'-ten*); from an unused root probably meaning to be hollow; the belly, especially the womb; also the bosom or

body of anything: KJV - belly, body, as they be born, within, womb.

⁹⁹ Proverbs 20:30. The same.

¹⁰⁰ Proverbs 23:16. (OT#3629, Strong) *kilyah* (*kil-yaw*); feminine of OT:3627 (only in the plural); a kidney (as an essential organ); figuratively, the mind (as the interiorself): KJV - kidneys, reins.

¹⁰¹ Psalm 16:7. The same.

¹⁰² Psalm 51:6. (OT#2910, Strong) *tuwchah* (*too-khaw*); from OT:2909 (or OT:2902) in the sense of overlaying; (in the plural only) the kidneys (as being covered); hence (figuratively) the inmost thought: KJV - inward parts.

¹⁰³ Ephesians 3:14-17. (NT#2588, Strong) *kardia* (*kar-dee'-ah*); prolonged from a primary *kar* (Latin, *cor*, "heart"); the heart, i.e. (figuratively) the thoughts or feelings (mind); also (by analogy) the middle: KJV - (+broken-) heart (-ed).

¹⁰⁴ Deuteronomy 30:11-14. (OT#:3824) *lebab* (*lay-bawb*); from OT:3823; the heart (as the most interior organ); used also like OT:3820: KJV - bethink themselves, breast, comfortably, courage, ([faint], [tender-] heart ([-ed]), midst, mind, unawares, understanding.

¹⁰⁵ Deuteronomy 6:6-9.

¹⁰⁶ Proverbs 18:8; 26:22. Same as Proverbs 20:27.

¹⁰⁷ Jeremiah 15:16.

¹⁰⁸ 1 Corinthians 3:17.

¹⁰⁹ John 6:51-56, 63.

¹¹⁰ John 15:4-10.

¹¹¹ Luke 17:20, 21.

¹¹² Matthew 5:5.

¹¹³ This chapter could be a stumbling block to those who have not learned the difference between pantheism and Christ in you, the hope of glory. If you cannot understand the difference, you are in danger. What I have described is "Christ in you." No suggestion is here made that humans have an intrinsic spark of divinity, which would be pantheism.

¹¹⁴ See Job 3:25 and Proverbs 23:7.

¹¹⁵ See Appendix C for a review of the subject of "speaking" in the book of Proverbs.

¹¹⁶ Gerzon, p.110.

¹¹⁷ Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17.

¹¹⁸ Melchizedek blessed Abram in Genesis 14:18.

¹¹⁹ Genesis 48.

¹²⁰ 1 Timothy 5:22.

¹²¹ Proverbs 18:21.

¹²² Psalm 81:10.

¹²³ Psalm 22:3.

¹²⁴ Exodus 14:13.

¹²⁵ Mark 11:24.

¹²⁶ <http://www.rapidnet.com/~ibeard/bdm/Psychology/edu.htm>

<http://www.rapidnet.com/~ibeard/bdm/Psychology/self-est/view.htm>

<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/self-est/view.htm>

¹²⁷ Revelation 12:11.

¹²⁸ Isaiah 49:25.

¹²⁹ Isaiah 54:13; check this in several translations.

¹³⁰ Charles Fitch, *Following the Light Out of Babylon*, p. 24.

¹³¹ 1 John 3:6.

¹³² We may pray God's word back to Him fragrant with agreement, while at the same time understanding that our victory is in Him alone. We are helpless to obey in our own strength and utterly dependent upon His presence for righteousness. Thus the truly converted will never be found saying or thinking they "have arrived."

¹³³ Romans 4:17.

¹³⁴ Psalm 33:6,9.

¹³⁵ Luke 6:45.

¹³⁶ Matthew 12:36,37.

¹³⁷ Proverbs 23:7.

¹³⁸ Deuteronomy 6:6,7.

¹³⁹ Psalm 51:6.

¹⁴⁰ Ecclesiastes 10:12.

¹⁴¹ John 6:51.

¹⁴² John 6:63; Psalm 119:103; Proverbs 1:23.

¹⁴³ Proverbs 18:8.

¹⁴⁴ Our view of the reliability of Scripture—of its trustworthiness—reflects our view of God. If we say that Scripture is unreliable, we say that God is not omnipotent. His word states that it came by the Holy Spirit and that it *is* profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness and is able to make us “*wise unto salvation*” (2 Timothy 3:16,17). If we doubt or deny this, we are saying that God lacks the power to keep His word free enough of error that we can find our way to heaven through it. In fact, we are calling God a liar (1 John 5:10).

¹⁴⁵ Psalm 33:9; Hebrews 1:3.

¹⁴⁶ Psalm 51:6.

¹⁴⁷ John 17:17.

¹⁴⁸ Jeremiah 8:6.

¹⁴⁹ Hosea 14:2,3.

¹⁵⁰ Psalm 107:21,22; 116:17; 119:108; 147:1; Hebrews 13:15.

¹⁵¹ Isaiah 51:11, KJV.

¹⁵² “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

¹⁵³ Isaiah 6:6.

¹⁵⁴ Isaiah 59:3,13,21.

¹⁵⁵ Jeremiah 1:7-9.

¹⁵⁶ Psalm 141:3; Ecclesiastes 5:2; 9:17.

¹⁵⁷ Matthew 15:11, 18-20; 12:33-37.

¹⁵⁸ Romans 10:6-10; quoting Deuteronomy 30:11-14.

¹⁵⁹ Philippians 4:4.

¹⁶⁰ Acts 16:25.

¹⁶¹ Philippians 4:8.

¹⁶² Job 3:25.

¹⁶³ Job 1:4,5.

¹⁶⁴ Job 13:15.

¹⁶⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

¹⁶⁶ Job 42:10-13,15.

¹⁶⁷ Job 19:25, 26.

¹⁶⁸ Job 42:10.

¹⁶⁹ Luke 1:18.

¹⁷⁰ Luke 1:26-38.

¹⁷¹ Joshua 1:2-8.

¹⁷² 1 Samuel 14:6.

¹⁷³ Exodus 17:3

¹⁷⁴ Exodus 17:6.

¹⁷⁵ Numbers 20:7,8.

¹⁷⁶ As an aside, this story reveals the love of God in ways not often considered. Notice that in spite of Moses' failure, God in mercy gave water to the thirsting people. Notice also that even though God denied Moses entry into the Promised Land, He gave Him something better—entrance into heaven. (See Jude 9.)

¹⁷⁷ Malachi 3:13-18.

¹⁷⁸ Revelation 14:5.

¹⁷⁹ 1 Peter 3:10.

¹⁸⁰ Revelation 12:11.

¹⁸¹ E. J. Waggoner, *The Everlasting Covenant*, (Berrien Springs, MI: Glad Tidings Publishers, 2002), p. 166.

¹⁸² Revelation 5:9;14:3;15:3.

¹⁸³ 2 Chronicles 23:13, KJV. *The New King James* version says they "led in praise," which probably means the same thing.

¹⁸⁴ Nehemiah 12.

¹⁸⁵ 2 Chronicles 20.

¹⁸⁶ James 3:2-10.

¹⁸⁷ 2 Peter 1:4.

¹⁸⁸ Revelation 15:3.

¹⁸⁹ Exodus 33 and 34.

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- ¹⁹⁰ Revelation 14:1.
- ¹⁹¹ Psalm 40:3, KJV.
- ¹⁹² Revelation 13:8.
- ¹⁹³ Proverbs 29:20. See Appendix C for a collection of texts on speaking from the book of Proverbs.
- ¹⁹⁴ Eccl. 5:2, 3.
- ¹⁹⁵ See Appendix C.
- ¹⁹⁶ Luke 23:9.
- ¹⁹⁷ Isaiah 53:7.
- ¹⁹⁸ Joshua Leeds, *The Power of Sound*, (Rochester, Vermont: Healing Arts Press), p. 45.
- ¹⁹⁹ Leeds, pp. 4,166.
- ²⁰⁰ Leeds, pp. 32,35.
- ²⁰¹ Leeds, p.36.
- ²⁰² *Ibid.*, p.66.
- ²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.123.
- ²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.141,129,118.
- ²⁰⁵ Isaiah 30:21; Psalm 32:8.
- ²⁰⁶ 1King 19:11-13.
- ²⁰⁷ Conversely, the adversary can speak to human minds in the same way as can Deity. How can we know which is speaking? Any voice or impression that conflicts with the principles of Scripture obviously comes from God's (and our) enemy. Our role is to ignore it and turn to God for strength and guidance. Praise and thanksgiving to God is an effectual weapon against this sort of thing.
- ²⁰⁸ Jan Goodwin, "Forget Me Not," *Reader's Digest*, June 2006, p. 124.
- ²⁰⁹ "Dover Beach," 1867.
- ²¹⁰ John 17:17.
- ²¹¹ Feynman, R. P. Vol 3, 1-1, quoted in Brian Fraser, "One Christian's Perspective on Quantum Mechanics," www.geocities.com/thirdgenerationphysics/.
- ²¹² *Introduction To Quantum Mechanics* (NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), pp. v., 18.

²¹³ Leonard Horowitz, DMD, MA, MPH, *DNA: Pirates of the Sacred Spiral* (Sandpoint, Idaho: Tetrahedron), p. 168.

²¹⁴ Matthew 8:10.

²¹⁵ Matthew 8:13.

²¹⁶ New York: Harper and Collins.

²¹⁷ <http://www.powells.com/biblio/2-0060531088-0>

²¹⁸ pp. 83, 153.

²¹⁹ Leeds., p. 5.

²²⁰ 1 Corinthians 14:10, 2:13, NIV.

²²¹ Horowitz, p.7.

²²² *Ibid.*, p.104.

²²³ *Ibid.*, pp.97-8.

²²⁴ *Leeds*, p.102.

²²⁵ Paul Pearsall, Ph.D., Gary E. Schwartz, Ph.D., and Linda G. Russek, Ph.D., "Organ Transplants and Cellular Memories," from *Nexus Magazine*, vol. 12, No. 3 (April-May 20205), P. O. Box 30, Mapleton Qld 4560 Australia.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Genesis 6:5.

²²⁸ Exodus 10:20.

²²⁹ Proverbs 4:23.

²³⁰ Romans 8:28.

²³¹ 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

²³² Galatians 3:8.

²³³ Romans 4.

²³⁴ 1 Corinthians 2:7; Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:26,27.

²³⁵ Genesis 3:5.

²³⁶ Matthew 5:45.

²³⁷ Romans 8:28.

²³⁸ John 10:10.

²³⁹ Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25.

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- ²⁴⁰ Proverbs 30:8, ASV.
²⁴¹ Philippians 4:19.
²⁴² 3 John 2.
²⁴³ Hebrews 11:10.
²⁴⁴ Revelation 21 and 22.
²⁴⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:9.
²⁴⁶ John 14:1-3.
²⁴⁷ Hebrews 12:2.
²⁴⁸ Psalm 90:10.
²⁴⁹ Daniel 9:24.
²⁵⁰ Genesis 5:24.
²⁵¹ Romans 1:16.
²⁵² Revelation 3:14-22.
²⁵³ 1 Peter 1:7, KJV.
²⁵⁴ Job 23:10.
²⁵⁵ Revelation 3:20.
²⁵⁶ Psalm 37:25.
²⁵⁷ Job 14:15.
²⁵⁸ Hebrews 12:2.
²⁵⁹ 2 Peter 1:4.
²⁶⁰ Fitch, p.17.
²⁶¹ Psalm 33:9.
²⁶² Mark 11:24.
²⁶³ Psalm 25:9; 32:8; 73:24; Luke 1:79; John 16:13.
²⁶⁴ Revelation 3:17.
²⁶⁵ Psalm 22:3.
²⁶⁶ 1 Corinthians 6:19.
²⁶⁷ Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4.
²⁶⁸ Galatians 3:24,25.

²⁶⁹ Revelation 3:20.

²⁷⁰ Colossians 1:27.

²⁷¹ Revelation 3:17.

²⁷² Or the nonconscious may control the autonomic nervous system; no one seems sure which.

²⁷³ For example, in the sanctuary services a lamb represented Christ, the Lamb of God. The lampstand represented Christ, the Light of the world. Christ is neither a literal lamb nor only a literal light. Each of these items represents something *about* Him.

²⁷⁴ Matthew 25:1-13.

²⁷⁵ Petroleum, our contemporary oil, is a bit less perfect but still applicable example.

²⁷⁶ Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13.

²⁷⁷ Hosea 6:3.

²⁷⁸ Zechariah 10:1.

²⁷⁹ Isaiah 45:8; Hosea 10:12.

²⁸⁰ Joel 2:23.

²⁸¹ Psalm 119:172.

²⁸² Isaiah 51:7.

²⁸³ Hebrews 8:10; Jeremiah 31:31-34.

²⁸⁴ Jeremiah 23:6.

²⁸⁵ John 14:16-18,23.

²⁸⁶ Isaiah 45:8; Hosea 10:12.

²⁸⁷ Revelation 19:9.

²⁸⁸ Genesis 3:10,11.

²⁸⁹ Isaiah 61:10.

²⁹⁰ Isaiah 30:1, KJV.

²⁹¹ Ephesians 6:10,13-17.

²⁹² John 14:6.

²⁹³ Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16.

²⁹⁴ Ephesians 2:14.

²⁹⁵ Exodus 15:2.

²⁹⁶ Psalm 18:2.

²⁹⁷ Revelation 14:12.

²⁹⁸ John 14:26.

²⁹⁹ Zechariah 3:7.

³⁰⁰ Exodus 25:8.

³⁰¹ Leviticus 26:12.

³⁰² 2 Corinthians 6:16.

³⁰³ 2 Peter 1:4.

³⁰⁴ Romans 14:23.

³⁰⁵ Ephesians 2:3.

³⁰⁶ *Following the Light Out of Babylon*, p.. 34.

³⁰⁷ Revelation 12:11.

³⁰⁸ Matthew 5:48; James 3:2.

³⁰⁹ Philippians 2:5.

³¹⁰ 1 John 5:12; Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:27.

³¹¹ Micah 6:8.

³¹² Romans 4:3; Genesis 15:6.

³¹³ Some translations say "prosperity" instead of "peace," therefore I claim both for my children.



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